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ADVENTURES OF A CASKET.



“ At the same instant the planks, logs, and carts of the barricade flew in every direction.”

THE
ADVENTURES OF A CASKET.

AN EPISODE

OF THE

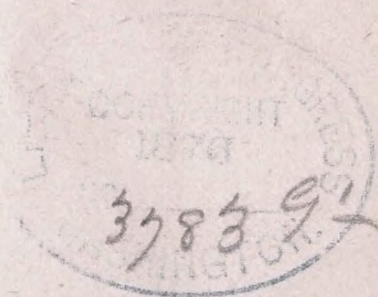
INVASION OF 1814.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH OF

THÉOPHILE MÉNARD. *present de*

M. J. J. E. Roy
"✓"

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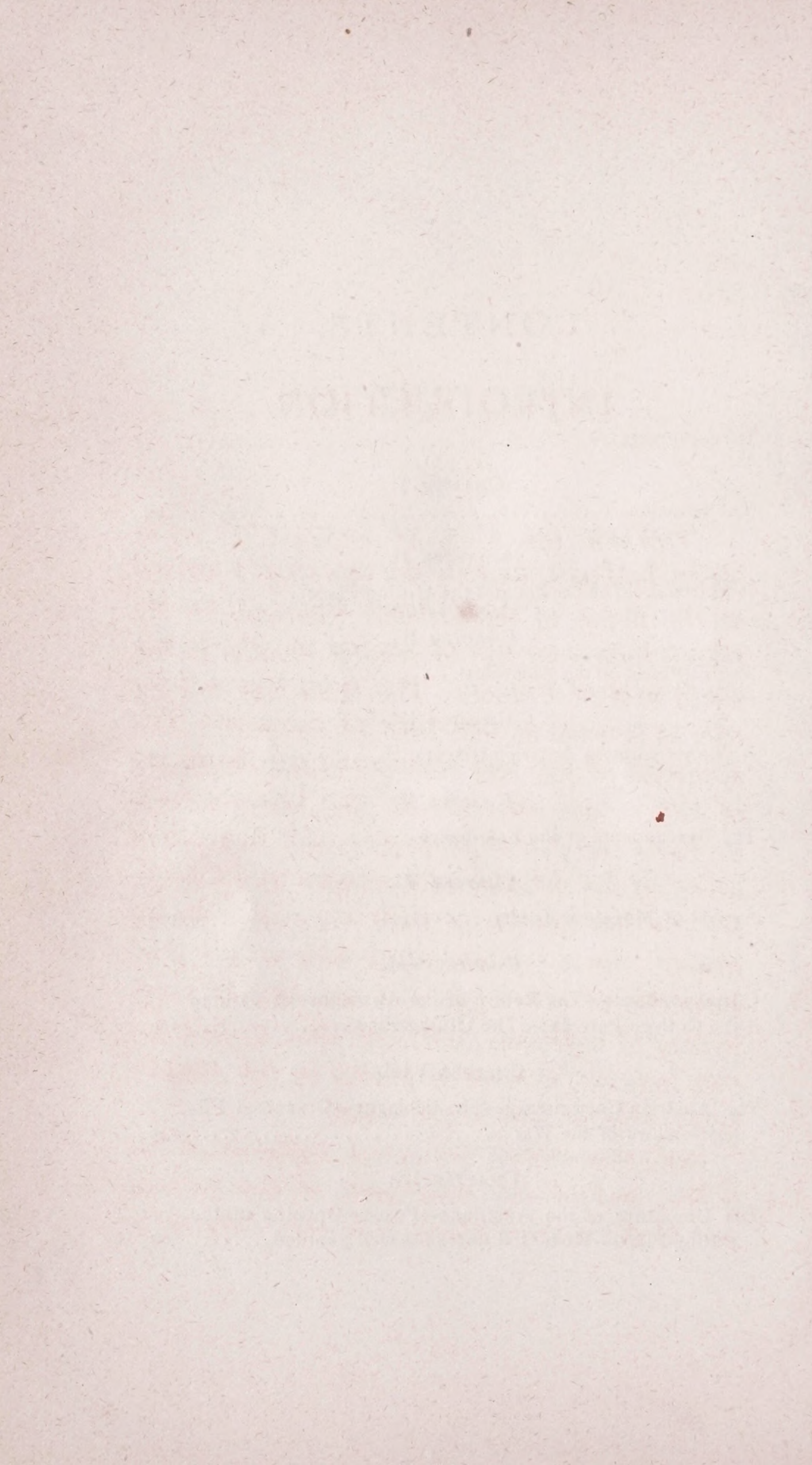
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INTRODUCTION.

TOWARD the close of October, 185—, at about half-past four in the morning, I arrived at the depot of the Orleans Railroad, on my return from a voyage of several months in the south-west of France. The train was a long one, as is usual at that time of the year. The approach of the bad season and the reopening of the courts and schools had brought back to Paris the crowd of people who had left it to enjoy the delights of a sojourn in the country, or the leisure of their vacation. In an instant, the depot was filled with an army of travelers, of every age and sex, and in every variety of costume, each hastening to find his own luggage, to have it passed by the custom-house officers, and to get home.

Notwithstanding the active vigilance of the police, and of the employees of the railroad and of the custom-house, it is very difficult, in

the midst of so much disorder, to prevent an occasional theft or at least a mistake.

It was to the latter that I happened to fall a victim, but, as the reader will find, if he will take the trouble to read this true story to the end, I had little reason to complain.

Two trunks, some boxes containing articles which I had bought at Bayonne, and a little bag—in all eight pieces—composed my traveling equipage. After the formalities of custom-house inspection, I had arranged my packages on the table or counter which extends the whole length of the room, waiting to have them removed. On either side were bundles, trunks, and boxes of every shape and size, belonging to two families, one of which—that on the right—was composed of a venerable old man, with hair white as snow, who, in his features and manners, showed marks of distinction which belong only to well-bred persons—of his wife, who appeared almost as old as himself, but whose face I could not see, as it was hidden by a black veil and by the fur trimming of her pelisse, and of two lads of fourteen or fifteen years of age, in the uniform of students, and who were probably the grandchildren of the two

elderly people whom I have just mentioned. The other family, the one on the left, was Spanish, and seemed to me to consist of five or six persons; but I paid little attention to it, so much was I attracted by the first one, or rather by the fine old gentleman who appeared to be its head.

I was waiting, while making my observations, for the return of a messenger whom I had sent for a carriage. He returned at length, and at the same moment a servant in livery, with hat in hand, advanced toward my neighbors on the right, and announced to them the arrival of their carriage.

"It is well," said the old gentleman, offering his arm to his companion and moving toward the door. "We will go home at once, and you, Joseph, will take care to have all our luggage placed in a hack and will follow us. Get a porter to help you, if you need one."

The man whom I had employed, and who had already commenced to load my baggage upon his wheelbarrow, hearing this last remark, said to Joseph, "If you wish, I will help you, for I can take all this luggage at a single load." Joseph consented, and my porter hastened to load up my trunks and boxes upon his

barrow. I superintended this operation with but little attention, or, rather, not suspecting an error possible. I was amusing myself by observing what was going on around me, and by noting the confusion caused by the numberless persons who were all speaking at once. At last, my man wheeled along his barrow, and a few steps brought us to the carriage which was waiting for me. I looked on at the operation of loading up my effects, some of which were placed upon the box of the carriage and some inside. I counted my eight packages, but the darkness did not permit me to verify their identity, and threw myself into the carriage, being in a hurry to reach home and get to bed, to make up for the sleepless nights and the fatigue of a journey of over five hundred miles of continuous traveling by rail.

It was near six o'clock in the morning when the carriage stopped in front of the door of my house. It was still dark. The porter, whom I had hard work to rouse, helped the coachman to unload my packages, and to carry them into the house. During this operation, I had reached my bedroom, so overcome with fatigue that I was content to call out to the

porter, "Are you sure you have brought in every thing?"

"Yes, sir; there are two trunks, one traveling-bag, four boxes, and a little case—in all, eight articles."

"That is right. Now, shut my door and call me at noon." And I went to bed, and was soon sleeping soundly.

I was still sleeping when the porter, faithful to his orders, came to call me. My first care, after dressing, was to put in order the things that I had brought back from my journey, and I then perceived that there was missing a little box in which I had packed some linen, several volumes, and some manuscripts relating to the Basque language, which I had purchased at Bayonne; for during my sojourn in the lower Pyrenees, I had made an especial study of this dialect. I regretted losing these curious works, especially a Basque grammar, an extremely rare work, only one copy of which had I been able to find in Bayonne.

In the place of the little box which contained my books, I found a casket, or little case, about the same size as mine, but a great deal older, and, above all, much dirtier. It was made of oak, of rough workmanship; the top

quite thick ; on one of the corners, and in two or three other places, the case was charred, and showed signs of having been exposed to fire.

The sight of this box made me regret the loss of my own, which it could hardly make good ; but how was I to find an owner for it ? Did it belong to the family of the old gentleman who was on my right, or to the Spaniards who were on my left ? Its filthy appearance and battered condition led me to suppose that it belonged to the latter—the more so, because I had seen nothing among the baggage of the first except some leather trunks, valises and boxes, all very nice, whilst I had observed among that of the Spaniards some wooden trunks, covered with worn or torn leather. I lifted it up by the iron handle on the cover, and placed it on my table. I noticed that it was very heavy for its size, and said, laughingly, “ Perhaps I have got hold of the strong-box of these Spaniards, and it may be filled with dollars.” Then I looked for a name or an address of any kind, but I found nothing but the numbers pasted by the different railroad-lines on the baggage of their passengers. Of these there were many, one on

top of the other—an indication that the little box was a great traveler; but they gave me no clue, especially as the top one had been partly rubbed off, and it was impossible to read the name of the place where it had been affixed.

At length, in turning it over, I perceived a key attached to a cord tied about the box, which helped to secure the top in addition to the lock. I untied the cord, and opened the casket, in the hope of finding inside what I had failed to do outside. A thick layer of scraps of paper, put in to fill up, was on the top. I removed these, and found a pretty little rose-wood box, inlaid with mother-of-pearl and silver. On a silver plate were engraved the letters A. and V., with the coronet of a baron on top, and the motto engraved around it, "What God guards is well guarded." This box was a real masterpiece. Its length was of the exact width of the little chest, of which it filled about half. In the rest of the casket were eighteen silver plates, with spoons and forks, bearing the same coronet and the same device, and under these a dozen knives, with silver handles, in a shagreen box, divided into twelve compartments. Another box, or case, contained a dozen coffee-spoons, silver gilt,

sugar-tongs, glass salt-cellars set in silver and porcelain figures, wrapped in wadding.

After having completed this inventory, I could not help exclaiming, "Well, I may as well conclude that I have found my Basque grammar." For although I had discovered neither name nor address, I thought that whoever might own these articles would hardly fail to reclaim them, and hasten to bring back my box to exchange for their own. To facilitate their researches, I hastened to the police-office to make known what had happened to me, and at the same time to advertise the matter in the newspapers.

I had not deceived myself. The next day, about five o'clock in the afternoon, my porter announced to me the visit of Le Baron de Villette, and at the same moment I saw coming into my room the white-haired old gentleman whose appearance had so struck me at the railroad-station. He had under his arm my little box, and as soon as we had exchanged salutations, he held it out to me, saying, "I have come, sir, to restore to you what is yours, and to reclaim from you what you have been good enough to take care of for me."

"I beg a thousand pardons, sir," said I,

“for having been the involuntary cause of the mistake which has put you to this trouble, and which I would have spared you had I known your address, by hastening to return you your casket so heedlessly taken for my own.”

“It is no fault of yours, sir; the mistake which has occurred could easily have been made by your messenger. He did not know the articles which belonged to you; but Joseph, my old Joseph, who has served me for more than twenty-five years, who knows all that belongs to me, and particularly this casket, did not observe it, and my wife was the first to notice the absence of the box, which she sets great store by.”

“I believe it,” said I, “for it contains objects of great value, and I am astonished that you abandoned them, as it were, in a box of doubtful strength, and, moreover, with the key to facilitate its being opened.”

“Your remark is very natural,” said the Baron, smiling, “but you do not know what a superstitious confidence my wife and I attach to this box, the intrinsic value of which is nothing. So when I told you my wife set great store by it, you thought that it was in consequence of

what it contained ; but she would willingly have sacrificed all the silver which was in it, even the pretty rosewood box, which you must have noticed, and which is a present from her daughter, to get back her casket alone, all empty, her dear casket, which she calls her luck-bearer."

" I declare, sir, you astonish me."

" I should astonish you still more if I were to tell you the history of this casket, for it is a history ; but it might not interest you, and I do not wish to occupy your time. I will therefore take my leave of you. Permit me, however, to make a request of you on the part of my wife. She charged me to urge you to do us the honor to come and dine with us sociably on Sunday next, that she may give you evidence in her own words of her gratitude."

" Really, sir, I am confused with your kindness and that of madame. I have done nothing but fulfill the commonest duty of an honest man, in returning to you these valuables which chance placed in my hands."

" I see you do not yet understand me. It is not for returning these valuables of which you speak that she wishes to thank you ; it is for having restored to her her precious casket, which is

for her a talisman which she holds in inestimable value ; and just as I was leaving home to come here, she said to me besides, ‘ You will find that my casket will bring us the acquaintance of a charming man, for this is a way it has of making amends for the discomforts it causes us.’ You would not wish, I am sure, to disappoint my wife in this presentiment.”

“ Really, sir, you are so engaging that it is impossible to refuse you.”

“ That is all right then,” said he, rising, “ until Sunday.”

He gave me his address, handed the casket to his servant Joseph, who had followed him, and took his leave.

The day after the visit of M. de Villette, I made some inquiries about him. I learned then that Monsieur le Baron de Villette had for more than thirty years performed the duties of receiver-general of taxes in two or three of our richest departments ; that he had retired several years since, after having obtained for his son-in-law the position which he had last occupied ; that he lived quite simply, although possessed of a large fortune ; but that instead of employing his superfluity in luxurious expenditures or costly fancies, he used it in good works.

This information only increased the wish I had to cultivate the acquaintance so singularly begun, not to mention the desire, no less ardent, of learning the story of that mysterious casket. In this frame of mind, I arrived on the day appointed at Monsieur de Villette's. I met with a most gracious reception both from the master and the mistress of the house. I will not repeat here the flattering things that were said to me by Madame de Villette, at whose right I was placed at table. It was, as the baron had told me, a family dinner. There were present the two young students whom I had remarked at the depot, who were the grandsons of the baron and madame; a lady of uncertain age, with a provincial accent of the most striking kind, who constantly called Madame de Villette, "my cousin," and the son of this lady, a young man of nineteen or twenty years of age, who had come to Paris to study law, and whom his mother had desired to accompany, to protect him from the dangers of the capital.

After dinner, we passed into the drawing-room, which was richly furnished, where coffee was served. On entering, I had glanced hastily upon the magnificent furniture which adorned this room, and had examined for a few moments

some masterpieces of painting which attracted my attention, when suddenly my eyes fell upon a beautiful *console* of the style of Louis XV., on which was a piece of buhl-work of the most exquisite description, and upon another *console*, which matched it, was majestically displayed the famous oak box by means of which I had made the acquaintance of Monsieur de Villette. At the sight of it, I could not help giving expression to my astonishment. The baron noticed it, and drawing near, said to me, "I see what causes your surprise: you did not expect to find in a *salon* a piece of furniture which to all appearance should be consigned to a garret. But you know what I have told you about my wife's attachment for the ugly box, which she would not exchange for the most beautiful production of Boule or of Tahan."

"Certainly," replied the baroness, who had heard these last words of her husband, "I prefer it to any of the creations of the most skillful artists in cabinet-ware or inlaid work; but, my dear, you ought to explain to Monsieur the reason of this preference, otherwise he will think I am a woman without taste, incapable of appreciating those masterpieces which are very justly the admiration of every body."

“Madame,” said I, “I do not need the explanation which you desire your husband to make, to be convinced that you know how to appreciate at their full value all these works of art; but I must confess that I am not the less curious on that account to learn the reason which makes you esteem so highly an object apparently so unworthy of it, persuaded that there must be something in this preference far more interesting than a mere matter of taste or of caprice.”

“There, now, my dear, you will surely have to justify the good opinion which Monsieur has expressed.”

“I should like nothing better; but the story is rather a long one, and may prove tiresome before I get through.”

“I assure you, in advance, that it will interest me very much, and that if I had not feared it might be indiscreet, I should have begged you myself to tell it to me.”

“Oh! yes, grandpapa!” cried the two students, in their turn, “do tell us the story of this box of grandma’s. We have heard something of it from time to time, but we have never heard the whole of it from beginning to end.”

“And I, too, my cousin,” said the country

lady, "should very much like to hear this history about which my late husband has frequently spoken to me."

"Come then," said Monsieur de Villette; "since you all wish it, I consent."

And in a moment, we were seated in a semicircle around the fireplace, and Monsieur de Villette began :

THE ADVENTURES OF A CASKET:

AN EPISODE OF THE INVASION OF 1814.

CHAPTER I.

THE INVASION.

IN 1813, I was employed as head clerk in the office of the special receiver of taxes, in the district of Baume-les-Dames, in the department of Doubs. Owing to the fact that I was the only son of a widow, I was exempt from military service, and was enabled to continue in the career for which my parents had destined me—a very great advantage at that time, when the conscription was claiming all the young men capable of bearing arms from the time they were eighteen years of age. My patron, Monsieur Diétry, was very intimate with my father, to whom he was under many obligations, and on this account he was willing to receive me into his office, to initiate me in the

business, and to assist me with his experience on my entry into my new career. Madame Diétry, who had also known my mother, was very good to me, so that I was looked upon rather as a member of the family than as a simple clerk.

On Sundays, we were in the habit of taking long walks in the neighborhood, which possessed many attractive and picturesque spots, and we sometimes went to fish or to hunt, according to the season. My life was a very agreeable one, until it was broken in upon by the troubles which were then agitating the whole of Europe, and especially France.

The year 1813 will be remembered as full of disasters for France. At that age, I paid very little attention to politics, but how could I fail to become interested in matters which concerned me so closely? My childhood and my youth had been passed at school during the period of Napoleon's victories. I had a blind faith in him, and considered his power as beyond the reach of danger. The deplorable retreat from Moscow had not shaken my confidence, and when, in the beginning of 1813, he had created a new army, and with his conscripts had gained the victories

of Lutzen and Bautzen, and, later, that of Dresden, I thought that he was going to regain, with more strength than ever, his ascendancy over Europe.

And this would perhaps have been realized, but for the successive defeats of his lieutenants, which forced him to fall back, in order not to be surrounded on all sides. This retrograde movement determined the princes of the Confederation of the Rhine to desert the Empire; and to render their defection more disastrous to the cause of Napoleon, they put it into execution during the great engagement which was taking place under the walls of Leipsic. Napoleon, after a struggle of three days, was forced to retreat, and his army, in considerable confusion, fell back on to the Rhine. The Bavarians wished to oppose his crossing, but they were crushed at Hanau, and the French army re-entered the territory of the Empire on the 30th of October, 1813.

Illusion was no longer possible. The end of this campaign had been more disastrous than the one which preceded it—the retreat from Moscow. France was threatened within her own borders, and it was evident that the allied armies were preparing to invade her

territory. Their intentions were soon rendered manifest by the famous declaration of Frankfort, a piece of Machiavelian diplomacy, in which the Emperor was set up as the only cause of the European wars, and in which France was loaded with testimonies of admiration and respect, which were all to be set at naught the next year. This proclamation, I know not how, was profusely scattered throughout the country, notwithstanding the vigilance of the authorities and of the Imperial police. It shook the power of Napoleon more than twenty defeats. It sowed upon the soil of France the germ of those political divisions which were soon to bear fruit and carry discouragement into the hearts of many of those who knew not how to separate the cause of the Emperor from that of the country.

The sub-prefect, the Imperial Procurator, the Mayor of the city, and some of the principal inhabitants, were in the habit of meeting at the house of M. Diétry, where they read the newspapers and the private letters which they had received. Each one brought his own news, which was communicated to the others in whispers. The allies, nevertheless, did not cross the Rhine immediately after their procla-

mation. They seemed to shrink from attempting an enterprise of such audacity. This respite restored somewhat our hopes. Some of the optimists of our society assured us that the enemy never had any intention of invading France ; that they would be satisfied with having made the threat, and that they would await, with arms in their hands, upon the right bank of the Rhine, the result of the negotiations which were about to be considered in the Congress assembled at Manheim.

Others, less confident, thought that the allies would enter France through Holland, Belgium, and the provinces of the Rhine which had been united to the Empire since the revolution, and that they would not make peace until France should have been reduced to her ancient limits ; but in any event, they were persuaded that we had nothing to fear for that part of the country which we inhabited, as the neutrality of Switzerland guaranteed us from any invasion of that part of our eastern frontier.

The whole month of November and a part of December were passed in this state of anxiety, alternating between hope and fear. But all of a sudden, an unexpected report dispelled our

doubts and dissipated all our illusions. The allied armies were invading France at every point. The neutrality of Switzerland, upon which we reckoned, had been violated, and an army of one hundred and fifty thousand men, under the orders of General Schwartzemberg, had crossed the Rhine from Basle to Schaffhausen, advancing across the Swiss cantons along the frontier of France, and threatening to rush like an avalanche from the heights of Jura upon the plains watered by the Doubs and the Sône.

A general panic followed. All business was suspended, every association was broken up, people gathered together in groups in the streets, anxiously inquiring the news, even from perfect strangers, and reports were not wanting, both true and false, and exaggerated and distorted, either by the fears or the imagination of the narrators. On every side, the question was constantly repeated, "What are we to do—what is to become of us?" for at every instant, the future, the immediate future seemed to assume an aspect more and more threatening. When the public vehicles or private travelers reached us from Belfort or Besançon, they were surrounded and overpowered with questions,

their answers only serving to redouble the general inquietude. The enemy, according to one, was laying siege to Theningen, and was advancing upon Belfort; according to another, the report of their guns had been heard in the direction of Altkirch, while others announced that he had crossed the Jura near to Pontarlier, had seized that town, and was preparing to march upon Besançon by way of Ornans. The operations of the authorities only served to confirm these sorrowful rumors. A decree of the Senate had commanded an extraordinary levy of three hundred thousand men. Active measures were taken to hasten the departure of the new conscripts, who were slow in answering the call. Requisitions for rations and forage were made for provisioning Besançon, the only fortified place in our neighborhood. The constabulary received orders to assemble in the chief town of the department, and their departure suspended both the requisitions and the call for conscripts, but left the country at the mercy of malefactors and vagabonds, who are always ready to take advantage of such critical times and of public misfortunes to rise up and carry on with impunity their dangerous enterprises. At length, Monsieur Diétry received orders to

transfer to the receiver-general his cash and all the registers and papers of his bureau ; his departure was to take place with that of the constabulary by which he was to be escorted.

His first thought was to take with him his wife and his niece, a young girl of twelve or thirteen years of age, whom he loved as his own child, and to remain at Besançon until matters should take a different turn. As to myself, I was to rejoin my mother, who lived at Orleans ; but Madame Diétry did not like the idea of being shut up in a warlike city, and to be exposed to all the horrors of a siege. We all knew the determination of General Manulaz, who commanded that place, as he had given out that he would be buried beneath its ruins sooner than surrender it. Monsieur Diétry concluded to follow the determination of his wife, and it was agreed that he would return immediately after having handed in his accounts to the receiver-general, and that then they would take counsel as to the course they would adopt. In the mean time, I was to remain with Madame Diétry, who could not be left alone with a little girl and a serving-woman during the absence of her husband.

It being no longer doubtful that soon, in a

few days perhaps, we would be invaded, every one was thinking of the means to secure from the foreign soldiery whatever they had of value. Some, reassured by the proclamation of the allied sovereigns, maintained that such precautions were useless or worse ; others—and this was the advice of the military men—considered all precaution as useless, but from a very different reason. Soldiers, they said, knew how to find out the most secret hiding-places ; and if the town was given up to pillage, it would be impossible to hide any thing from their avidity. In the midst of these contradictory opinions, Madame Diétry was in great perplexity. She had many precious things and objects of considerable value, and her house offered no place in which she thought she could place them with safety ; besides which, to her mind, the house of a financial agent of the government would be less respected than any other, and under the pretext of seeking for public property, it would be more thoroughly searched, and it was not probable that even her private property would be respected. Her husband, to whom she had communicated her fears, had concluded to await his return from Besançon, to decide what course to take in the matter ; but

time was pressing, and matters were advancing faster than they were prepared for. The enemy had passed by Belfort, and had advanced as far as L'isle-sur-les-Doubs, one day's march from Baume-les-Dames.

Whilst she was in this state of anxiety, she received a visit from a venerable ecclesiastic, the Abbé David, the principal of the college—a man loved and respected by all the inhabitants of the town and of his pupils, who looked upon him as a father. “Madame,” said he, “I am aware of your embarrassment, and I come to offer you my services, if you think that they can be of any value to you. There is under the vault of the college chapel, a sort of cell or little dark room in the recess of the walls, the entrance to which is small, but which is large enough inside to hold a great many things. I consider this hiding-place as safer than any of those which can be found in this town; I have already placed therein the sacred vessels of the chapel and my silver; those persons to whom I have spoken of it are to take their property there to-night. One of them, Madame Bracieux, your friend, has told me of your embarrassment, and as there is still a little room, I have come to see if you wish to take advantage of it. I

will only ask you to keep the matter a profound secret, because every one would wish to use my hiding-place, and unfortunately it is not as large as my good will, and besides, you know that there are not wanting evil-disposed persons, who, for some days past, have been watching what is going on among the citizens, and do not hesitate to say aloud, "You may hide your riches, but when the Cossacks come, we will show them the places in which you think you have made them safe, and we will divide with them."

Madame Diétry thanked the abbé, and accepted his offer with gratitude. "Prepare, then, at once," said he, "your trunks, and get ready what you wish to conceal. Every thing must be ready this evening, so as to be there by eight or nine o'clock, for the rest of the night will be needed to wall up the entrance to the hiding-place, so that to-morrow morning there will be no traces of what we have done. As soon as you shall have terminated your preparations, Monsieur de Villette," added he, turning to me (for I was present at the interview), "will come and inform me, and I will send with him three of my biggest scholars, who will help him to carry your effects, for

I do not wish to employ in this task either servants or workmen, that our secret may be the better kept."

Madame Diétry thanked him again, and told him that she would conform exactly to the course he had marked out. She added, "But, sir, you have heard, no doubt, the opinions of those who pretend that it is useless to hide any thing; some because the allies will respect our property, others because, if the town is given up to pillage, the most secret hiding-places will not escape discovery. Tell me frankly what is your opinion of this matter."

"Madame," replied the abbé, "the course which I am taking now ought to show you my views. I do not adopt absolutely the opinion of the first, or the exaggerated fears of the latter. Wars of invasion are no longer wars of pillage, of fire, and of rapine. The foreign powers are not carrying on against us a political war, and far from wishing a war of fire and blood, I think that it is their interest to be as moderate as possible, in order not to excite a general uprising, which would seriously compromise the safety of their armies, and would probably soon cause them to repent that

they had ever crossed our frontiers. My opinion is, that, in the open towns which the enemy's troops will have to pass through, they will commit no excess unless they meet with resistance; and I think that you have acted more wisely in remaining here than you would have done if you had gone into a fortified town. Here at least we are not upon the line, as far as I can see, where a great movement of the troops will take place, nor do we form a strategic point, the occupation of which would necessarily involve a battle such as would be likely to compromise our safety. I think, then, that we will not be visited here by any thing more than a marching column, which will commit no great excesses, from the reasons I have already given; but it is not the less prudent to keep out of sight, as far as possible, such valuables as would tempt the cupidity of foreign soldiers, for discipline can not always be strictly observed among large bodies of soldiers, and it will not do to expose men to temptation. After that, madame, when one has done all that human prudence can suggest, we must submit to the will of God, and remember that what he guards is well guarded."

The Abbé David had hardly finished

speaking, when the sound of trumpets and the distant beating of drums were heard in the street. In moments of crisis, the least incident suffices to produce alarm. I rose with a bound, and ran to open the window; but the apartment we were in was separated from the street by a yard. I could see nothing, but could only hear more distinctly the sound of the drums, the trumpets, and the tramp of horses. Madame Diétry, quite alarmed, begged me to go and see what was going on, and to come and report. In an instant, I was in the street, and soon learned that it was a reconnaissance that a detachment of cavalry and infantry was going to make on the road to Belfort. The foot-soldiers stopped in the town to rest, and the cavalry continued their march. An officer of infantry, to whom I spoke, informed me that they had orders to advance until they fell in with the enemy, and then they were to return and report to the general what they had seen, and what they might have found out as to his force and position.

I at once carried this information to Madame Diétry and to the Abbé David, who were awaiting my return.

“Now, madame,” said he, rising up and get-

ting ready to go, "keep up your courage, and, above all, trust in God. You see that you have no time to lose. I leave you to make your preparations, and this evening shall expect Monsieur de Villette, whose services I now put into requisition, to help us wall up the inclosure of our hiding-place: I do not wish, from the reason which I have already given you, to employ workmen at this task which, from our little experience, will probably occupy us all night."

CHAPTER II.

A SKIRMISH—THE CASKET AND THE HIDING-PLACE.

WHILST Madame Diétry, aided by her servant-girl and her little niece, was busy in packing up the objects which she desired to hide, I hastened to rejoin some of the young men of the town whom I had left in conversation with the military. I learned then that some travelers, just arrived from Clerval, had announced that a party of Hungarian hussars had made their appearance that very morning in that little town; that after having passed through it to see if there were any French troops there, they had left, as they said, to rejoin a corps of infantry and cavalry which was to come and occupy it.

Clerval is a large borough, or little town, about ten kilometres from Baume-les-Dames, on the road to Belfort. When the commander of the French detachment learned this, he commanded his men to halt for an hour,

after which he would proceed on his way to Clerval. The inhabitants readily offered to the soldiers refreshments, which were accepted eagerly and gratefully. They were almost all young men of my age, or even younger; it was easy to see that they were not accustomed to fatigue, and that it was with difficulty that they carried their knapsacks and muskets. The greater part of them had not yet received the uniform of their regiment, and wore a gray *capote* over their peasants' dress; nevertheless, they did not appear to feel uneasy at the approach of the enemy, and their faces lighted up when they spoke of being able, perhaps, of engaging him with success. The subaltern officers were older, and had all made several campaigns; some of them bore the marks of wounds and the cross of the Legion of Honor. The infantry consisted of three companies, under the orders of a major; the cavalry was composed of half a squadron of chasseurs, commanded by a captain. The whole detachment was under the orders of Baron de Faudoas, Colonel of the Thirteenth Regiment of Chasseurs.

When the time for their departure approached, one of the young men with whom I

was, proposed to go on in advance on the road to Clerval, and from a height about half way to that place, a little off the road, where, he said, we could have a good view from a distance of what was going on. We accepted his suggestion, and started off at once. Just outside of the town, we found the chasseurs, who had halted on the main road; they were not as young as the infantry, and appeared to be more accustomed to the business of arms; but, unfortunately, they were not well mounted, and their horses looked as if they could not bear much fatigue. Hardly had we passed by them when the trumpets sounded to horse, and the whole troop moved on; but as we walked much faster than they, we soon left them all, both cavalry and infantry, some distance behind us.

After marching three quarters of an hour, we reached the height for which we had set out. This spot was admirably chosen for a post of observation. Before us lay the road to a little village situated about two kilometres from Clerval; it was completely deserted; behind us our little detachment was advancing, hidden, from time to time, by the winding of the road. The chasseurs marched in front, and were preceded by a platoon acting as an advanced guard

to examine the route. A little in advance of this platoon were two troopers with muskets ready for use.

I watched all these movements with feverish curiosity, and my eyes were cast alternately from our troops to the deserted road which lay before us. All of a sudden, we perceived two, then three, horsemen, then an entire platoon coming out of the village.

They marched in about the same order as our chasseurs. My heart beat violently at this sight, for I felt sure that it was the enemy. As our people could not perceive him, one of us ran with all haste to give the alarm. In an instant afterward, an officer of chasseurs came to the place where we were, and having noted the route over which the enemy was marching, returned with all speed to rejoin his men. We soon saw the horses of the chasseurs break into a trot, in order to get out of a little defile in which they were, and reach the open plain. We then saw the advanced guard of our soldiers move forward toward that of the enemy, from which it was now separated by only a kilometre. Soon, the scouts on both sides were within hail, and on one side was heard the cry of "*Qui vive !*" and on the

other, "*Wer da !*" Almost immediately, four musket-shots were exchanged, and the horsemen of both sides turned around and rejoined the platoons of the advanced guard, which, in their turn, fell back upon the detachment which followed them. Our chasseurs halted to let the infantry which was following them come up. Colonel Faudoas, accompanied by several officers, had in the mean time ridden up to the height where we were. He perceived a considerable body of cavalry debouching from the village, and advancing slowly along the road. No infantry was in sight. He immediately sent orders to the major to station a company of infantry upon the hill where we were and which commanded the road, and to deploy it as skirmishers in the vineyards and orchards which were laid out on the side of a hill, the slope of which, on that side, was inaccessible to cavalry. At the same time, he cautioned us to retire if we did not wish to be exposed to danger. We withdrew a short distance, but not so far as to be out of sight of what might take place.

Colonel Faudoas had rejoined his troop ; a company of *voltigeurs* then arrived on the hill, and took position as ordered by the colonel.

The two other companies of infantry remained upon the road at the entrance to the defile. A quarter of an hour passed in death-like silence. At this moment, I could almost hear my heart beat. I saw the enemy's cavalry, two or three times stronger than the French detachment, advance slowly along the road. When they saw our chasseurs, who remained motionless, they formed at once for a charge.

Our cavalry faced about and retired behind the two companies of infantry ranged in order of battle on the road. They immediately opened a running fire upon the enemy, and at the same time, those stationed as skirmishers upon the hill opened upon them in flank. The Austrians, caught between two fires, thought they had fallen into an ambushade. They turned about with all speed, and commenced a retrograde movement which was soon turned into a rapid flight, when our chasseurs started to pursue them. Our foot-soldiers, carried away by their ardor, also pursued for some time, and the officers could hardly restrain them. It was wonderful to see those young men—I might almost say, children—for the first time in the presence of an enemy, show such ardor, such force, and such impetuosity far

above their tender years ; their countenances, at first pale and downcast, became animated and transfigured ; their eyes shot forth lightning, and those poor conscripts whom I had seen in the morning, bending under the weight of their accoutrements, leaped over hedges and ditches with incredible agility.

In an instant, the road was cleared ; the colonel recalled his troops, and after half an hour's rest, he ordered them forward toward Baume-les-Dames ; but the order of march was the reverse of that of the morning, for the infantry was in advance and the cavalry brought up the rear.

The engagement had not been a murderous one ; no one being killed on either side. A half a score of the enemy's hussars had been wounded, as we learned afterward, though not seriously ; four had had their horses killed and were taken prisoners. Our young conscripts brought them in in triumph as the trophies of their victory. Nobody had been hurt on our side ; only one little fellow had a bullet through his shako, and pointing to the hole made by the ball, congratulated himself " that he was not as tall as a grenadier."

It was five o'clock in the evening when we

reached the town ; the night was already quite dark ; for, as will be remembered, it was December. The colonel stationed a guard of infantry at the entrance to the town, with a considerable body of cavalry in advance, and vedettes along the road ; and having thus provided for the safety of his command, he allowed them to repose for the rest of the night.

On the road, I was talking with the officer whom I had met in the morning, and complimented him upon the manner in which his young soldiers had behaved during the combat which had taken place. “ The *combat*,” said he, laughing and emphasizing the word ; “ do you call that a combat ? It is not even an encounter. If we had been a corps of veterans, it is not likely that a single shot would have been fired ; for it was a useless waste of powder. We were not sent out to fight, if we could avoid it, but only to reconnoitre, and after learning the condition and position of the enemy, to return and report ; but the colonel had an idea that it might not be amiss to try the mettle of our young conscripts, and did so. It is perhaps as well, for there is probably not one of them who is not satisfied that he has been in a battle, and they will all have a marvelous account of it to give

their comrades as soon as they get to Besançon.

“Do you expect soon to enter that town?”

“Unless my orders are countermanded; for, in the present state of affairs, nothing is certain. I expect to be there to-morrow night.”

“Then the Austrians may, indeed, pay us a visit by to-morrow.”

“By to-morrow or the day after, it is quite likely. In an enemy's country, it is necessary to march with great care and slowly, unless you are in considerable force and the Austrians do not seem to be very numerous, in this direction, at least; for they have had a week since they crossed the Rhine, and ought to be at Besançon by this time. They do not seem to be in a hurry; and they are right, for they will get a warmer reception there than the one you witnessed this morning.”

The events which I had gone through with in the last few hours had completely driven from my mind Madame Diétry and the hiding-place of the Abbé David. As soon as I arrived in town, I hastened to her house. She scolded me for my long absence, which had caused her a good deal of uneasiness; a rumor had reached her that there had been an engagement

between the French and Austrians on the Clerval road, and she knew that I had gone in that direction with some companions. I told her what had happened, and gave her to understand that my curiosity had not exposed me to any danger.

"But," said she, "your presence was not necessary and was a needless exposure; if any thing had happened to you, while you might have been pitied, every body would have said that it was your own fault, and that you had no business to go where you had nothing to do."

"That's right, aunt," said little Aglaé, who was present; "give him a good scolding; he would have been better employed in helping us pack our trunks than in running after the soldiers with a parcel of little boys." And she accompanied her speech with a pout that I could not help laughing at; for Miss Aglaé, greatly spoiled by her aunt and uncle, was fond of teasing me whenever she got an opportunity, and I had often to laugh at her efforts to thwart me; so that we had many quarrels, but for all were the best friends in the world.

"You are wrong, my niece," said her aunt, "to reproach him; for he offered me his services, and I declined them, as I did not think it

was the kind of occupation for a man ; but now," said she, addressing me, " your part of the task will begin, and you may inform the Abbé David that every thing is ready, and then return for what is to be taken away."

I went at once to the college. The abbé called my attention to the fact that there were still a great many people in the streets, and that it would be more prudent to wait a few hours longer. " During this time," said he, " I will make use of you to help the masons," and he led me into the yard of the college, where I found three young lads busy—one mixing mortar, another piling some stones in a hod, and the third carrying them off on his shoulder. The abbé loaded me up without ceremony with a hodful of bricks, and then, pulling off his cassock, he picked up a bag of plaster, and taking a lantern in his hand, bade me follow him. We went up a long flight of stairs, stopping to rest from time to time, and finally reached the arched roof of the chapel, and laid down our loads close to the entrance to the famous hiding-place. It was a nook which seemed to have been made for the very purpose, and it was not possible to find it out without destroying the building.

After five or six trips like the first, the abbé thought we had material enough ; I was glad of it, for I was tired out. The abbé noticed it, and remarked that it was easy to see that I was not accustomed to labor like the lads I had seen in the yard, who, it seems, were farmers' sons who had quit the plow to enter the seminary as ecclesiastical students, in order to get clear of the conscription ; " but," said he, " the work was by no means light, and is not yet done ; and until the time comes to finish it, we'll go and take supper, which will give us the strength to accomplish the task. Come, Monsieur de Villette, you are one of us ; I have had a place set for you at table."

I tried to excuse myself, urging that Madame Diétry might be uneasy at my long absence. " Madame Diétry," said the abbé, " does not expect you ; I have sent her a message that I would keep you here ; besides," added he, smiling, " she knows very well that you are not as much exposed here as on the Clerval road."

I did not require any further urging, for the idea of a good supper suited me exactly, as I had eaten nothing since breakfast, and I was of that age when even the strongest emotions of

the mind do not take away one's appetite. My comrades, as the principal called them, appeared to be of my way of thinking, and we paid every respect to the good abbé's supper. He himself was not lacking in appetite, and during the whole of our meal did not cease to make us sharers in his gayety, which finally relieved me of all the apprehensions which had agitated me. As soon as supper was over, the abbé rose, and recollecting himself for an instant, said, "Let us return thanks to God for the repast he has just given us ; let us beg him, at the same time, to assist us through the crisis which is upon us ; let us invoke his Holy Mother ; let us also invoke his well-beloved disciple, whose feast it is to-day (for it was the 27th of December), that they will implore the Saviour of the world to restore peace to our country and to all Christians, and that he will vouchsafe to be merciful to us in particular."

After a moment's silence, during which each one of us mentally offered his prayer to Almighty God, the abbé resumed: "Now, my children, that we have placed ourselves under the protection of God, let us rely exclusively upon his holy providence, and finish without loss of time the work we have begun. Go

at once, all four of you, to Madame Diétry's. She has only two trunks to send here; there will be two of you for each; be careful to take no lantern with you, and do not come in by the main entrance; follow the little street to the left of the college buildings till you reach the small door which opens upon the yard, where you found the materials which we used this afternoon. Here is the key of that door, which I give in charge of M. de Villette, who will be careful to lock it as soon as you have all passed in. You will then go into the kitchen, where you will find a lantern burning, and you will join me under the roof of the chapel, where I will await your coming." He repeated these instructions, impressing upon us the necessity of following them strictly.

We found Madame Diétry somewhat impatient at our delay, and much exercised by a new source of disquietude. She had just learned that the French soldiers, advised that the enemy was preparing to surprise them, were getting ready to march at once. We knew nothing of this, but it was possible, and it therefore became necessary that we should hasten back to the college with the trunks before the Austrians should arrive. Just as we were about to leave,

Madame Diétry called me into the next room, and taking from the table a little plain oak box, she gave it to me, saying, "Monsieur de Villette, I confide this casket to you; it contains some things of considerable value, which are very precious to me. There are in it our silver, my jewelry, some gold and some bank-notes, which belong to my niece, Aglaé. It is a part of her inheritance, which my husband, her guardian, was about to invest for her; but this is not a favorable time for such a transaction, and he had resolved to await a better opportunity. I hesitated for some time about parting with this property which I might, perhaps, have placed in safety in my house, in view of the small space it occupies, and wished to consult my husband about it. But time is pressing, and as, from what the Abbé David and you have told me, the hiding-place at the college is perfectly safe, I decided this evening to send this casket there also; but I did not wish to speak in the presence of these young people, whom I do not know, of the value of the articles it contains. I tell it to you alone, that you may know the great importance of the trust which I confide to you, and that you may use every care in relation to it."

I took the casket by the handle on the lid, assuring Madame Diétry that she might rely upon my zeal and discretion. As I handled it with great care, in order that the motion of the box might not cause its contents to rattle, and so betray what was in it, she said, "Do not be afraid, for I have wrapped each piece of silver in paper, and have placed my jewelry in a box lined with wadding; the gold coins are in five rolls, of a thousand francs each; the bank-notes are in a pocketbook, and the whole is packed tight with some valuable laces and handkerchiefs, which completely fill the casket and will prevent any motion. Besides this, the lock is strong, and the wood and top of the box quite solid, so that you may let it fall even without any danger of disturbing the contents; so carry it along without any more care than you take for the trunks which you have in charge."

When we returned into the room where we had left the three young men, Madame Diétry said to them, "Pardon me, gentlemen, for having kept you waiting; I wished to give to M. de Villette this box of clothing and toilet articles. Now you may go; but first you had better take a little glass of this cordial, which

will strengthen you and protect you against the effects of the foggy night."

We did not need much persuading, and each one of us took two glasses of the liquor, which was delicious. Then two of my companions took hold of one of the trunks, the third took up the other by the handle on one end, and I took the other, carrying in my right hand the casket which she had just confided to me; and in this order we left the house in silence, and walked along quietly in the most profound darkness, toward the little street through which we were to reach the college.

When I got into the open air, I felt a kind of vertigo, caused either by the fatigue I had undergone during the day or by the effect of the cordial which I had just taken on top of a heavy meal, at which I had used more wine than I was accustomed to, or, perhaps, by all of these causes combined; my head became heavy, and I felt a great desire to sleep. By a violent effort of my will, I overcame this drowsiness; my legs, which seemed to be giving way, were braced up, and we arrived at the little gate before my companions discovered my distress. As both my hands were full, I begged one of them who was carrying the other trunk to take

from my pocket the key of the gate, to open it and lock it again. As soon as the gate was open, I went in and directed my steps toward the kitchen, on the table of which I found the lighted lantern which the abbé had provided. I mechanically put upon the floor the casket which I had in my right hand, and took the lantern to light our way to the hiding-place, where the Abbé David was waiting for us. At all events, this is what I suppose I did, for I do not recollect distinctly what took place; as from the time of leaving Madame Diétry's house, I was not conscious of any thing that I did; I only recollect that when we reached the roof of the chapel, the abbé said to us, "Come, gentlemen, let us be quick; you know that the enemy is coming, and it won't do to be caught here with our trowels in our hands."

He then sent me into the little hiding-place with the lantern and the trunk that I was carrying. I have a confused recollection that it was already full of all sorts of trunks, packages, boxes, etc., and also that I placed my trunk alongside a casket very much like that of Madame Diétry's; at least this recollection came to me afterward, and confirmed me in the full belief that I had perfectly fulfilled my commission.

After having put away the second trunk, they commenced to brick up the hiding-place. I can give no account of this operation; all that I know is that I mechanically passed the brick and stone to one of my companions, who handed them to another, and he to the real workman—that is to say, the Abbé David—and the oldest of the young men, who, it seems, had learned the mason trade before coming to college. Monsieur David also understood this kind of work, and in less than two hours, the opening was walled up and concealed so thoroughly that it would have been difficult to distinguish it from any other part of the wall.

I was overcome with sleep; when the work was done, two of my companions were as much exhausted as I was, and Monsieur l'Abbé, who noticed how completely we were overcome, said to us before the task was entirely accomplished, "My children, you need rest. Jacques and I will finish what is to be done; you go to bed." We did not wait to be told twice. My two companions went to their beds in the dormitory, and I returned to the little room which I occupied at Madame Diétry's house. The most profound quiet reigned throughout the town. I did not stop to inquire whether the French

had left or the Austrians arrived; all I thought of was to get to bed and rest after the fatigues of the day and the two sleepless nights I had passed.

CHAPTER III.

THE ENTRANCE OF THE AUSTRIANS.

It was near noon when I awoke, and my sleep would not have been broken even then had it not been for the extraordinary tumult which was made in the street. I ran to my window, and found all the neighbors and the whole street in great agitation. "The Austrians are coming!" "Here are the Austrians!" cried out to me, at the same moment, several persons beneath my window, of whom I had inquired what was going on.

I finished dressing in great haste, but hardly was my toilet completed, when the tumult in the street ceased, and was succeeded by the noise of the galloping of horses. Five Hungarian hussars rushed by at full gallop, but this did not prevent me from observing their appearance. They held the bridles of their horses in their teeth, their sabres in their right hands, and in their left their pistols, cocked;

guiding their horses with their knees, and urging them forward with their spurs. After having advanced for some distance on the road to Besançon, they retraced their steps, all the time at full gallop; they had replaced their pistols in their holsters, but still carried their sabres in their hands. They had been sent to ascertain if there were any French soldiers in the town, and returned to give an account of their mission. Within ten minutes after their return, we heard the clang of trumpets, and soon an entire regiment of hussars appeared at the head of the street, advancing in the order used by cavalry when entering a town. Notwithstanding the pain which the sight of the enemy caused me, I could not help admiring the fine appearance and warlike air of the men, and particularly the vigor and mettle of the horses.

“Ah!” said I to myself, “if our cavalry were only as well mounted as these hussars, how they would chase them!”

Following the hussars came a battalion of infantry. But though the Austrian horse compared so favorably to ours, the same could not be said of their foot-soldiers. Instead of that warlike appearance and steady march which so distinguish our regiments of infantry,

the poor *kaiserlichs* marched in disorder, with broken ranks and heads down, as if they were afraid to look the French in the face; their white uniforms, or what were meant for white, were soiled, stained with mud, and often torn. The drummers, instead of being at the head of the column and directing its march, as with us, were placed in the centre, and beat, only occasionally, a short and monotonous march, to which the soldiers could not keep step. As for myself, this lugubrious march chilled me completely through, and made me think that I was assisting at the funeral service of the independence and glory of France. Somewhat later, our peasantry took a less serious view of the Austrian drum-beat, and interpreted the sound which it seemed to give forth by these four German words, *Fleisch, Brod, Wein, Branntwein*,* because these were the first words which the Austrian soldiers uttered when they entered their houses—words which they repeated, like their drums, even to nausea.

When the troops had all passed by, I went to Madame Diétry, whom I found in tears; even the smiling and arch little Aglaé had also been crying, and was seated in silence, her eyes

* Meat, bread, wine, brandy.

all red, beside her aunt. I thought it was the arrival of the foreign troops that caused her pain, and tried to reassure her.

“It is not the presence of the Austrians,” said she, “that causes me distress, but I have just received a letter from my husband, announcing that his business will not permit him to leave Besançon for two days. Now that the communications are interrupted, how can my husband manage to return hither? If I could only go to meet him! but I should be no more permitted to go to Besançon than he to return hither. And so we are separated for God knows how long a time—he to be exposed to the horrors of a siege, I to dangers which I can not foresee, and neither of us able to assist the other or to share the peril in common. What a horrible situation!”

Here her sobs redoubled, and little Aglaé joined with hers. I was powerless to calm such legitimate grief. I endeavored, nevertheless, to tranquillize her, telling her that communication probably would be interrupted only for a short time; that if the direct road to Besançon should be intercepted, Monsieur Diétry could always take a by-road, which would no doubt be free.

“But,” said she, “do you think it calculated

to reassure me, if I knew that he were endeavoring to reach me, at this season of the year, by one of the cross-roads, almost impracticable, and deserted except by evil-disposed people—at a moment, too, when there is no police nor authority, and where he would be exposed to all sorts of risks? I should prefer, I think, to have him remain at Besançon.”

Finding that I made no progress in this direction, I tried to turn the current of her thoughts elsewhere, and then rose, telling her that I would go to see the Abbé David, to ascertain if there was nothing further to be done in regard to closing up the hiding-place.

“Apropos,” said Aglaé, “did you take good care of our casket, in which my aunt has put my pretty little watch and gold chain, which my uncle gave me on my birthday?”

“Do not be uneasy, mademoiselle, it is all safe.”

“Ah! so much the better; you see that I set more store by my watch and chain than by all the rest.”

“More than by your *louis d’or* and bank-notes which are with your watch?” said her aunt, smiling.

"Certainly, for my watch was his present, and I think more of it on that account."

"What you say, mademoiselle," said I, "does honor to your heart, and makes me quite forget the disagreeable things you said to me yesterday."

"Well, well, are you still thinking of that? I had already forgotten it; as also your efforts to tease me."

"How," said I, "can you speak to me of teasing you, when you never lose a chance to find fault with me, and to torment me?"

"That is a new accusation, indeed," said she, "that I should find fault with you. Do you hear, my aunt, what he says?"

I prolonged this little quarrel, because I hoped that I might succeed in diverting Madame Diétry for a moment from her sad thoughts. When she found herself appealed to by her niece, she answered, "I thought you were going to keep the peace, but here you are quarreling again. I should think we had enough war going on outside without being disturbed indoors."

Finding that this jesting had been carried far enough, I held out my hand to Mademoi-

selle Aglaé, and in a tone half serious and half playful, I said to her, "Your aunt is right, let us make peace."

"I am agreed," answered she; "and consent to forget all my complaints against you since you have taken so much care of my little watch and chain, but I insist upon two conditions to our treaty of peace."

"What are they?"

"First, that you will do as you have promised me, and make me a copy of the picture of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin, which you showed us, and which you gave to your mother."

"I grant it."

"Second, that you will mend the head of my big doll, as you also promised me, unless, indeed, my uncle should bring me a new one from Besançon, as he intended to do; but I am afraid that his other occupations will have made him forget my commission."

"I grant this too," said I, gravely.

And then we shook hands as a sign of our reconciliation.

This child's-play being finished, Madame Diétry said to me, "You said a moment ago that you wished to go and see the Abbé

David. Was not every thing done last night?"

"Yes, madame; but I thought it might be well to see that all traces of our labor were removed, and we were so tired that Monsieur David sent us to bed before this part of our task was completed."

"It is quite likely that he attended to this himself. I know him well, and do not think he would leave his undertaking half finished. Nevertheless, I think it better that you should go and see him, if only to learn the news of what is going on; he is always well informed."

That was the real object which I had in proposing my visit to the abbé, for I was persuaded that he had left nothing undone in regard to the hiding-place. I repaired, therefore, in all haste to the college. I learned, on my arrival, that the abbé was in conference with the mayor and the commander of the Austrian troops, which had just arrived. I waited until this was over, and then went to find the good abbé.

"Ah!" said he laughingly, "have you woke up? I recommend you to stick to your trade as a financier, and let masonry alone, for you will make but a sorry workman."

“ I quite agree with you, Monsieur l’Abbé,” said I, in a similar tone ; “ but as times go, I am afraid that the trade of financier, and that of the mason too, as well as all others, will not amount to much.”

“ Who can tell ; for it often happens that when matters are at their worst, they will soonest change.”

“ Then,” said I, “ we must soon expect a change ; but do you see any evidence of it, and has your interview with those gentlemen who have just left you given you any reason to hope ?”

“ Not the least in the world ; these gentlemen have only come to tell me that the college is to be turned into a barrack, and that the battalion that has just arrived, or a large part of it, is to be lodged here.”

“ O Monsieur l’Abbé,” cried I, almost overcome ; “ and can you tell me such a thing so calmly, and almost with a smile ?”

“ And would you have me cry about it ? I am sure I do not see that it is a matter to create so much alarm.”

“ But think of the precious things that are concealed in your hiding-place ! Do you know that in one little box only that I brought

here last night, there is contained a fortune in gold, and jewelry, and bank-notes?"

"Well! it is not more exposed than the sacred vessels or than my own silver, which are also there."

"O my God! what will become of Madame Diétry when she learns that the property of that little orphan, her ward, whom she loves so much, is thus exposed? Could you not avert such a misfortune, and try and make these gentlemen understand that a house of education ought not to be turned into a barrack?"

"I think," said the abbé, "that you exaggerate the matter a little. Listen a moment to me, and you will see that you have no cause for so much uneasiness; but, first, you must know that the Austrian commander required of the mayor to provide a building big enough to accommodate his men, in order that he might keep his soldiers together in case of a surprise. He came to the college, as you have seen, to satisfy himself as to the number of men it would hold. I took good care to make no opposition, although I pointed out the inconvenience of transforming an establishment for public instruction into a barrack. He

answered with a good deal of reason that the college was at present empty, but that even if it had been full, war had its necessities, to which every thing must be made to yield, and that as he was master, he should have to insist. What could I answer? If I had persisted, I should probably have awakened his suspicions that there might be something of value concealed in the building; so, instead of making the slightest objection, I placed every thing at his disposal. I took him myself through the dormitories into the class-rooms, through the study-halls, and even into the kitchen. The only favor that I asked of him was to allow me to keep my own apartment, which, as I told him, is not very large, and could not be of much use to him. 'Not only your own apartment,' said he at once, 'but if there is any other part of the building which is indispensable to you, point it out, and it shall be reserved also for your use.' I thanked him, and told him I wanted nothing but my own apartment, which, if necessary, could be completely shut off from the rest of the college by closing the door which communicated with the principal entrance, and using only another stairway which I showed him. 'Do as you

wish, Monsieur l'Abbé,' said he. 'I will reserve then for my use the little entrance, and beg you will forbid its occupation by your soldiers, who will not require it.' 'I will place sentinels in charge of it, and you may depend upon not being disturbed.' So, you see, monsieur, that we got along very amiably."

"Well," said I, "I hope you will not trust too much to this amiability; and I am afraid you are too imprudent in thus remaining alone in the midst of five or six hundred foreign soldiers."

"And I think," answered the abbé, "that I have less to fear in the midst of a battalion than if I were with only a few detached troops. Among so many, with their officers, discipline will be better maintained than where two or three soldiers are lodged alone in a house far from the eyes of their other comrades and of their superiors. And I am also convinced that our hiding-place will be much safer than if the college had remained empty, and only a few men had been quartered in it. As long as it shall be occupied numerously, order will be kept up, and it will be a curious thing for us to see these foreign soldiers mounting guard for the safety of the treasures which we

are so anxious to keep from their rapacity. But this is not all: observe that this little stairway which I have reserved for my own use, and which the soldiers are forbidden to approach, is the very one which leads to the roof of the chapel—that is to say, to our hiding-place. The door at the head of these stairs, which opens into the arches, is locked with a strong padlock, and the one at the bottom will also be constantly closed, except to such persons as will come to see me. So, you see, that no one can reach the place where our riches are buried without passing by my apartment, and I am the dragon placed to guard this new golden fleece.”

“You have a very happy disposition, M. l’Abbé, to be able to look at things in such a favorable light. As for myself, I am not so much of an optimist, and I am much afraid that you will be disappointed in your hopes.”

As we were speaking, we heard a number of voices on the stairs. “Oh!” said the abbé, “these are probably my guests who are arriving. You shall judge for yourself if I am too much of an optimist, as you have just said.” At that instant, a hurrah was heard at the door, and I saw two officers enter, one of whom

was the commander and the other a captain.

“M. l'Abbé,” said the commander, “we come to take up our quarters in your house. This is Captain Mayer, who will remain here in command of the place. I have assigned to him the apartment which you told me belonged to the professor of rhetoric. I have also told him what was agreed to between us, in relation to your lodgings. You may address yourself to him, if you have need, and he will keep matters straight; I hope you will make good neighbors.”

“I doo, Monsieur l'Abbé. I hope ve vill lif like goot neighpors,” said Captain Mayer, in his turn, with an Austrian accent, in violent contrast to the perfect pronunciation of the commandant.

“In addition,” said the commander, “I have to announce to you a new guest, Captain Mayer's lieutenant; can you, M. l'Abbé provide a room for him?”

“There is,” answered M. David, “the apartment of my assistant, but it is in the other part of the building, somewhat removed from that which the captain will occupy.”

“That is nothing; on the contrary, it is well that the two officers who are to lodge here

be placed in different parts of the building, so as to exercise supervision over several points at once. And, now one more matter: you know, M. l'Abbé, that when in a campaign, the soldiers are fed by the inhabitants. Certainly I do not mean you to understand that you will be obliged to feed the four or five hundred men who are to be quartered in your house—this is a matter which concerns the mayor of the town, who, upon my requisition, is to take charge of procuring provisions for the men; but you will be obliged to set two additional places at your table for these officers who are to be your guests, unless you prefer to have them served in their own rooms.”

The abbé had not expected such a request, or rather such an order; for it was indeed an order, although given in a polite way. I saw by the movement of his lips, that he was evidently put out, but promptly mastering his feelings, he answered the commandant in his usual quiet way:

“I will be highly honored to have these gentlemen at my table, but you know that it is a college table, and not very sumptuous—”

“I know, I know,” interrupted the commandant, laughing. “‘Food; healthful and

abundant,' is the usual expression of the prospectus. These gentlemen will be perfectly satisfied with it, and they know that on a campaign they must not be too hard to please.

"Come," said he, turning to Captain Mayer, "go, and look after your men, and then attend to the distribution of the provisions which the mayor will send for them. That will give M. l'Abbé time to get your dinner ready. As for myself, I will go and look after the rest of my command."

At these words, Captain Mayer, striking the floor with his sabre, which he held in his left hand, carried the back of his right hand to his shako, made a half turn, and gravely walked down-stairs. The commandant saluted the abbé more gracefully, though not in such a military style, and followed his subordinate. As soon as they had gone, the abbé and I looked at each other for some time without speaking, and then there came simultaneously to our lips the same question, "What do you think of these gentlemen?" I was the first to answer: "I do not think that at present they have any idea of pillaging or maltreating us; but, in the shape of requisitions and of the rights of war, they will devour us little by lit-

tle; and when there is nothing left to give them, who can answer for what will happen?"

"And why worry ourselves in advance," said the abbé, "about misfortunes that may never come upon us? The future belongs to God, and we must not be unreasonably disquieted about it. On the contrary, let us thank him that the present does not appear to be as alarming as we feared. These enemies whom our imagination had pictured to ourselves as ready to put every thing to fire and sword seem gentle enough, and show no disposition to injure us wantonly. They demand meat and drink, which is very natural, and our soldiers did the same thing in their country, and were even more exacting than these seem to be. Now, I must leave you to go and give orders to my cook to have every thing ready when these gentlemen return; but first I have a favor to ask of you."

"What is it, M. l'Abbé? I shall only be too glad to be of service to you."

"Well then, I wish you to help me entertain these two officers at dinner. I admit that I feel no little embarrassment in finding myself exposed to a *tête-à-tête* with these two *kaiser-lichs*, and I shall not be sorry to have some

one to help me in the duties of host which are thus forced upon me ; and, besides, I expect to be obliged to absent myself before dinner is over, and I should not like to leave them alone in my room."

"Since you desire it, I accept your invitation with pleasure. I will go and tell Madame Diétry not to wait dinner for me, and I will rejoin you immediately."

CHAPTER IV.

A DINNER WITH THE AUSTRIAN OFFICERS.

I WAS afraid that Madame Diétry might be alarmed, as I had been, by hearing that the college was to be entirely occupied by soldiers; and I took care, in communicating this news to her, to add all the explanations and all the reasons which the Abbé David had given me to reassure her as to the safety of the objects which we had hidden away. She appeared to be quite satisfied, and declared her entire confidence in the prudence of the abbé; but the thought of her absent husband and the obstacles in the way of their reunion preoccupied her to such an extent that every thing else seemed indifferent to her.

On leaving Madame Diétry's to return to the college, I met one of the employés of the mayor's office, who seemed to have some urgent affair on hand.

“What is the matter, Monsieur Bernard?” said I. “You seem to be full of business.”

“Don’t speak of it. I hardly know where to begin first. Just think of it! The Austrian commander has made a requisition upon us for ten thousand rations of bread, meat, wine, forage, and oats, for some troops who are to arrive to-morrow and the day after; and what the town can not furnish must be procured in the neighboring villages. And besides, he has given notice that this requisition will be followed by others still more considerable; ‘for,’ said he, ‘it is the intention of the general-in-chief to establish here a part of the storehouses for the troops who are to lay siege to Besançon; and I am now in search of convenient storehouses, but have found nothing as yet except the college church, which will probably be used to store forage.’”

“Have you spoken about it to the principal?”

“No, it is hardly necessary to consult him; for if it did not meet his views, it would make no matter. The buildings of the college are already occupied for barracks, and thus the inhabitants are greatly relieved from furnishing lodgings for the soldiers. It would thus seem

a great convenience to have the forage stored there, as it would be under the immediate guard of the soldiers; and then, if there is not room enough in the church, the immense arches over it could be made to answer for a granary, and hold almost as much as the church itself."

I could not help thinking that this was going to be a great source of danger to our hiding-place. "But," said I, with an air of indifference, "has this been determined on?"

"No; it is as yet only an idea of the mayor's, but I think well of it, and believe that it will be done, if it should be decided to establish here a depot for these provisions."

By this time we had reached a large rolling-mill, where there were vast sheds, which Mr. Bernard was going to examine, to see if they would answer the purpose. "Here," said I, "you will find much better accommodations for your storehouse than the college church."

"We will see; but it is rather far from the centre of the town."

"And what of that?" answered I. "Do you think that the cavalry who will require these stores will care about a few feet more or less? And besides, a building filled with

forage is in great danger from fire. A lantern left burning or a spark from a pipe may set fire to the straw or hay ; and you may easily imagine the irreparable misfortune which would result from a fire which might happen in the centre of the town, and not only destroy the church, but the numerous buildings in the neighborhood, among them that of your father, which, I believe, adjoins the college."

"That is very true, and I had not thought of it. I will speak to the mayor, and will try to turn him aside from this project. Will you come with me to inspect the rolling-mill?"

"No," answered I ; "I have not the time."

"In that case, *au revoir* ; but before leaving you, I must tell you that your services will probably be put into requisition."

"And of what use can I be?"

"As an auxiliary in the mayor's office. The number of employés is hardly sufficient for ordinary times, and is now quite inadequate ; so that the mayor proposes, in order to help us, to put into requisition the clerks of the lawyers and notaries, as well as those of all the public offices. You are one of the first upon the list, and may expect to be called upon at any moment. And so I will wish you good-night."

“Adieu!” said I, leaving him, while thinking that this was another unfortunate complication.

I went in all haste to the college. The principal was still alone. I reported to him what M. Bernard had said to me.

“You gave him a very good answer,” said the abbé to me; “and now that I am advised, I will speak to the mayor, who, I am sure, will easily recognize the inconveniences of establishing a forage depot in our chapel. As to the arches, to take away any temptation to use them, I will say, as is true, that they are not in good condition, and that it will be dangerous to load them down with any heavy weight. Now, with reference to the establishment of depots, I must say that I do not see any inconvenience in it for the people of the town—quite the contrary; for that will require, as a guard for the storehouses, the presence of a permanent garrison and of officers who will preserve order, and, while guarding the safety of their depots, will also promote the safety of the inhabitants. But I pity the poor villagers who live within the district, who will have to furnish the supplies, for on them the requisitions will fall; and if soldiers are sent out to

enforce these levies, many exactions and excesses of every kind will follow. But why should I have melancholy forebodings? Come, let us drive such thoughts away, and prepare ourselves to face bravely the two champions whom we may expect here in a few minutes. While waiting for their arrival, I must show you the field of battle which I have prepared."

Saying these words, he led me into the dining-room. I was struck with the cleanliness and order of the apartment. Four places were set at the table, which was covered with a fine cloth as white as snow. Napkins to match were placed at each plate, and silver dishes on each side. Silver spoons and two beautiful silver candlesticks with lighted candles ornamented the table. All of the silver was marked with a *D*, the initial of the abbé.

I could not help exclaiming, when I saw such a display, "But I thought you told me that you had hidden all your silver away up there!"

"I have concealed only the college silver—that is to say, the silver for the pupils; and there are some eighty silver *couverts** and as

* A *couvert* is a set consisting of a fork and spoon.

many cups put away. But I have not concealed any of the silver which belongs to me; and, before dinner is over, you will see that I have acted wisely. You do not seem to notice," added he, "what is here;" and he pointed to the buffet, on which were arranged ten bottles of various forms, some of which were covered with thick dust and cobwebs, which bore witness to their age, as gray hairs indicate our own.

"You do not mean it, Monsieur l'Abbé?" exclaimed I, at the sight of the bottles drawn up in line, like soldiers on parade. "Can you possibly intend to make us all drunk?"

"My friend," said he, in a serio-comical way, "we must suit ourselves to the times; and," pointing to the table, "there is the battlefield, and here," pointing to the buffet, "are our small-arms and our artillery."

"Well, then," said I, "I acknowledge myself unequal to the task of doing my share."

"My child," said he, "do you not see that I am only jesting? Do you imagine that I would counsel you to drink more than you ought? Be not uneasy; our adversaries will not think that our supplies are too abundant. I have said that a *kaiserlich* can drink his four

bottles at dinner without feeling uncomfortable ; and at this rate, you see, there is none too much, for you and I will only have one apiece. But let us stop jesting and speak more seriously. I believe it is politic and proper to act with these men as I am doing. Instead of appearing to act grudgingly, and to seem to regret giving them to eat and to drink, which would only discontent them, I think it better to be unsparing, in order to dispose them more favorably toward us. So you see what I have done for the liquid part of our dinner. As to the solids, there will be soup, a large piece of beef, one dish of vegetables, a leg of mutton with beans, and a salad ; no side-dishes ; no delicacies—*food healthy and abundant*, as the commandant said ; the whole washed down with tolerable wine. I think all this ought to satisfy them.”

“ Indeed,” said I, “ if they are not satisfied with this, they must be hard to please ; but, M. l’Abbé, if you treat your enemies so well, how will you treat your friends ? ”

“ With less ceremony, my dear child—as, for instance, I treated you last night ; but then you had a dish which will be wanting here—the dish of good-feeling. You know the pro-

verb, 'We can catch more flies with honey than with vinegar.'"

"I hear steps upon the staircase," said I, interrupting the abbé; "these are probably your guests who have arrived." The abbé took one of the candles from the table, opened the door, and lighted the way for the newcomers.

"Pardon me, gentlemen," said he, "I ought to have had a light placed at this entrance; as we seldom used it before, there never has been any." Saying these words, he showed them into his bedroom, which served him as a parlor, and bidding them sit down, he added, "Please to rest here for a moment, while I order the dinner served."

The two officers said nothing, and seated themselves in silence. I did the same, and we all three remained silent for a few minutes, during which time I had an opportunity to examine the principal's guests. I have already told you something of Captain Mayer, of his accent and military stiffness; to finish his portrait, I will add that he seemed to be about forty years of age; his hair thin, but, as a compensation, he wore enormous mustaches, which reached his ears, and seemed to divide his face

in two. After seating himself in an arm-chair, he placed his large sabre between his legs, both his hands resting upon the hilt, his chin supported on his hands. In this attitude, his eyes vacantly fixed upon the ceiling, he appeared to await with ill-disguised impatience the hour for dinner.

The other officer, the lieutenant, was quite a young man, just fresh from some German university ; his hair was light and long, and his shako could hardly cover his luxuriant locks ; his face was a clear red and white, like that of a young girl, and he might have been taken for a young woman in disguise but for the down which was beginning to cover his upper lip and his chin. His voice, although soft and agreeable, was a baritone, almost a basso. But of this I only became aware some time afterward, for as yet our silence had not been broken, and I began to feel quiet embarrassed, not knowing whether I should speak first or wait to be interrogated. The young lieutenant appeared to be as much embarrassed as I was, at one time looking at his captain, whose eyes remained fixed upon the ceiling ; at another, looking round upon the paintings and drawings which ornamented the principal's room,

some of which were the work of the pupils of the college.

The arrival of the principal put a stop to this dumb scene, which had become somewhat annoying. At a single glance, the captain took in the appetizing appearance of the table loaded with dishes, and especially of the bottles ranged upon the buffet in front of him. His countenance, until then so cold and phlegmatic, seemed to light up; he said some words in German to his lieutenant, who answered with a "*Ja, mein Herr,*" uttered in a base voice which startled me, so astonished was I at hearing such sounds from that juvenile mouth. Then the two officers unbuckled their sabres, which they placed on the back of a chair.

The abbé offered to put them in the next room. "No, no," said the captain; "soldiers should never separate themselves from their arms."

The abbé did not appear to notice the distrust which this remark indicated, and hastened to help them. It was a pleasure to see these two men eat, particularly the captain; he bolted every thing, and his companion seemed to be already satisfied, while it seemed as if the captain had only just begun. But if he emptied

his plate hastily, he emptied his glass still more quickly, and I began to think that he would easily dispose of the four bottles of wine which the abbé had spoken of. At length, after he had got his second slice of mutton and his second bottle of wine, he heaved a sigh of satisfaction, and said to the abbé with as little harshness in his voice as possible, "You haf giffen us a goot tinner, Monsieur l'Abbé. I dank you for eit, for I hat a creat abbe-dide."

"I am very glad, captain," said the abbé, "that you found the dinner to your liking; but your lieutenant does not appear to be of your way of thinking, for he is eating nothing. Lieutenant, shall I offer you a second slice of mutton?"

"*Gratias ago Domine*," answered the young officer in his deep voice.

"Ah!" said the captain, "de lieudenand can not speak Vrench ad all; pud he speaks Ladin like Cicero."

"In that case," said the abbé, "we can understand each other, and these two young men," designating me, "can talk together."

"Do you speak Latin?" said the young lieutenant to me in that language.

"A little," I answered.

"Then we shall be able to understand each other," said he. Now the ice was broken, and the reserve which had lasted till then disappeared entirely.

The dessert was brought; a few glasses of bordeaux soon put the guests in good humor, and the conversation became more and more animated.

The captain and the abbé were gravely discussing the merit and quality of different wines, whilst my partner was telling me of his studies, of the university in which he had been brought up, of his intention of practicing law when circumstances forced him to take up arms to serve his country.

He spoke Latin with a great deal of facility and elegance, but with a Teutonic accent which at times rendered it difficult for me to understand. Although I had stood high in my classes and had taken two premiums, I could not express myself in Latin with as much ease as he could; I was obliged to hesitate for my words, and to construct my sentences in my head before answering him, whilst he spoke fluently and without wavering, as if it had been his native tongue.

This arose from the habit he had acquired in the university, where the students were trained from their entrance to speak Latin with each other, and where the classes and the explanations of the professors are all carried on in that language. I myself acquired some of this facility in my intercourse with the Hungarians and Austrians, during the invasion; for we constantly spoke Latin together.

A knock at the door interrupted our conversation when it was just at its height. I opened it, and an Austrian sergeant who was standing there addressed me with these words:

“Herr Captain Mayer?”

I led him into the dining-room. He stopped at the threshold, and assuming the posture of a soldier under arms, made a military salute and said a few words in German to the captain, who rose hastily, hooked his sword upon his belt, and, taking up one of the bottles which were on the table, he poured out a brimming glass and offered it to the sergeant, who emptied it in a single swallow, and placed it back on the table, saying, “*Ich danke, Capitaine*” (thanks, captain); and wheeling around, he walked down the stairs, lighting the officer’s

steps with a lantern which he had got somewhere or other.

As soon as they were gone, Lieutenant Hirtsch (I remember his name particularly, for Miss Aglaé remarked later, that the best way to pronounce it was to sneeze) informed us that the commandant had sent for the captain; probably to see how his men were lodged, and if they had what they needed; the inspection would not take a great while, and the captain would doubtless return soon.

So it turned out, and he brought the commandant with him. The appearance of this officer was quite unexpected, but he addressed us, on entering, in a very affable manner, "A thousand pardons, gentlemen, for my disturbance, but, being so near, I could not make up my mind to return to my quarters without bidding you good-night, and thanking you, Mr. Principal, for the generous hospitality you have shown to my officers."

"You are too good, sir," said the abbé; "I do not see how I have deserved these thanks from you."

As we had all risen on the entrance of the commandant, and were still standing, he begged us to be seated, and the abbé said, "Well, sir

we will do so if you will honor us by accepting a glass of champagne, and allow us to drink your health."

"With pleasure," said the commandant, and he took a seat alongside of the abbé. After the wine had been passed round, the commandant resumed the conversation.

"I was thanking you, Monsieur l'Abbé," said he, "for the pleasant reception which you have given to my officers, and I can easily judge, from what I see myself, that Captain Mayer has not exaggerated any thing in the report he has just made to me. I am happy especially in seeing that you have not deemed it necessary to do as a good many of your countrymen have done—who seem to consider the allied troops as only a gathering of pillagers and brigands, from whom it was necessary carefully to hide their silver and jewelry. I have observed this more than once since entering into France, but particularly at the mayor's house, who invited me to dine to-day. This is bad taste, at least on the part of persons whose social position is known, and who, while they receive us into their sumptuously furnished apartments, give us nothing but a pewter spoon and a steel fork to eat with. A peasant may be for-

given for hiding away the little table silver he may happen to own, and as no one expects to find a silver service in his house, it does not seem strange to see his table set out with only common ware ; but in a rich man's house, it looks as if we were injuriously suspected, and wounds our feelings. And certainly, after the declaration made by the allied sovereigns, so frank, loyal, and explicit as it is, and after the proclamation of our general-in-chief, Prince Schwartzemberg, the French ought to understand that we are not making war on them ; that we bear them no hatred or animosity ; that we have no other intention than to force the Emperor Napoleon to make a lasting peace, by obliging him to give up his ambitious projects, which are as prejudicial to France as to the rest of Europe. No doubt the presence of foreign troops is a heavy burden upon the country ; but we are endeavoring, and will continue to endeavor to render this as light as possible, by maintaining the strictest discipline among our men, and by punishing with unrelenting severity every violation by our soldiers of the rights of the people, either in their persons or their property. So, Monsieur l'Abbé, you may rest assured that all that silver-ware that you dis-

play upon your table is in no wise exposed to any greater risk, with our four hundred soldiers in the college, than when you had none but your own students in it. Not a single thing that belongs to you, no matter how valuable it may be, shall be taken from you by our men; and should any thing of this kind occur to give you the least cause of complaint, do not hesitate to report it, and you shall receive justice at once, and woe be to the guilty one! But, with all our good intentions, I can not answer as fully for such things as unjust distrust may have tried to hide from our eyes. This absence from houses where it is evident they are of daily use, must naturally excite suspicion, and suspicion sometimes gives rise to bad thoughts; for in an army there are all kinds of dispositions. Men who would not think of carrying off a watch from its hanging place, or a piece of silver from the dinner-table, not from delicacy alone, perhaps, but for fear of punishment, can not help saying to themselves, 'There is some place or other where these valuables are hidden; let us search for them; if we find them, no one will perceive that we have taken them;' and they search, and often, almost always, find; for there is no hiding-place that a soldier does

not discover in the end, if he once sets about it ; and then he is not likely to leave any traces of his doings, and it becomes almost impossible to find him out ; besides which, though we may use every effort in our searches, we can not sympathize very deeply with the victims of such thefts. If, for instance, your mayor should come to me to-morrow, to report that he had been robbed of a dozen sets of silver forks and spoons, I should say to him at once,

“ ‘ Why ! how is this, Mr. Mayor, did you have any silver ? I did not notice any.’ ”

“ ‘ Well,’ he will say, ‘ that is because I had hidden it away.’ ”

“ ‘ And so, too, the thieves have hidden themselves, to conceal their doings. Are you quite sure that this robbery is the act of our soldiers, or is it not just as likely to be the work of some of those very people whom you employed to make your hiding-place ? You must be quite sure of your facts before you make such an accusation.’ ”

“ I feel then, Monsieur l’Abbé, that it is really wiser and more prudent to show confidence in us, as you have done, than to mistrust and suspect us. I have expressed myself thus fully to you, because I am aware of the esteem

you enjoy among your fellow-citizens, and I hope you will tell them what I have said, for I am sure it will be doing a service to them as well as to us."

When he had finished these words, he arose, and, with his two officers, bade us good-night, and retired.

I must confess that the long harangue of the Austrian commander had made me shudder, especially when I heard him speak of hiding-places, of the way soldiers have of finding them out, and the kind of indifference that officers feel about ferreting out those who rob them. I trembled for the safety of our hiding-place upstairs, and repented that I had urged Madame Diétry to put her valuables in it; and as I had helped to conceal them, it seemed to me as if I should become responsible for the crime, should they happen to be stolen, and, in some sort, an accomplice to the theft. I communicated my thoughts to the Abbé David, while felicitating him for the way he had acted, which had drawn forth such praise from the Austrian commander. He listened to me with his usual benevolence and calmness, until I had finished, and then, looking at me with a playful smile full of good nature, he said, "How unsophisticated

you are, my young friend, and how easy it would be to take advantage of your want of experience! Here you are taking the alarm from what this Austrian officer has said; ready, to all appearance, to advise Madame Diétry, and all those who have hidden their valuables here, to take them away at once, with the seeming idea that they will be safer in the keeping of the good faith of strangers, than walled up in the solid masonry of our chapel. What the commandant says may be true from his view of the case; it is better, as he said, not to *seem* to distrust them, but, while showing them a certain amount of confidence, I don't think it would be prudent to carry this too far. I am willing to admit that he is sincere in what he says, and speaks without concealment; I will even go further, and admit that the discipline of the Austrian army is admirable, and that the smallest offenses even are severely punished; unfortunately, however, France is not invaded by the Austrians alone, who are influenced by political views in treating us with moderation, for their sovereign's daughter shares the throne of France; but the allied army is made up of Russians, Swedes, Prussians, Bavarians, Saxons, and others, who all have their revenge to grati-

fy, and who have no motives for forbearance, except, perhaps, the fear of provoking a general uprising of the people. How do we know how soon we may have a visit from the forces of some one of these other nations? You may be sure, it is better to act always with circumspection; as for myself, if I had it to do again, I should do just as I have done."

CHAPTER V.

THE DESCENDANTS OF THE ESTERHAZYS.

THE events which had transpired so rapidly in the last few days had hardly left me time to think of my own position. The night after the dinner with the abbé, I had slept but little, my mind being overburdened with sad reflections and memories of the past as well as the future. My mother, from whom I was separated by a distance of over three hundred miles, doubtless needed my presence near her during such a crisis as that through which we were passing; I was equally anxious to be with her, but how was I to manage it? I might possibly accomplish it if I could reach, by some by-road with which I was acquainted, that part of the country which was as yet unoccupied by the enemy; but could I leave Madame Diétry, while her husband was still away, leaving her alone with her daughter and servant-girl, in a large house, which it was almost certain would be

taken to lodge soldiers in? After all the kindness that I had received from this family, would it not be mean and ungrateful to abandon them at such a moment?

On the other side, every moment of delay only increased the obstacles which prevented me from joining my mother. In a few days, every road would be occupied by foreign troops. How could I think of undertaking such a journey, alone, on foot, and at that season of the year? I was forced then to remain here indefinitely.

These reflections occupied my mind, as I have just said, during most of the night, and I did not fall asleep until toward morning. When I woke up, I went out to try and dispel my sad preoccupations. It was one of those nasty, foggy mornings of December, more calculated to depress my spirits than to relieve them. I walked, nevertheless, for some time in the street distractedly, when I came upon the Austrian battalion, which the commandant was inspecting in a little square. The sight of these foreign uniforms redoubled my bad humor, and I returned to the house more sorrowful than when I left it. I found Madame Diétry as low-spirited as I was myself. She handed me a letter addressed to me, and bearing the stamp of the

mayor's office. It was a requisition for me to go and work in the office, and to spend the next night there. "This, then," said I, "confirms the information which I received yesterday; these gentlemen have not lost any time."

"What is it all about?" said she.

I handed her the letter, telling her what Monsieur Bernard had said to me the evening previous.

"I must confess," said she, "that the mayor is not very thoughtful. He knows that I am alone, that my husband is away on public service, and he requires that the person who is charged to replace him shall assist day and night in his office. He can do nothing worse than to send soldiers to lodge in my house."

She had hardly finished speaking, when there was a ring at the door-bell. The servant who went to open the door returned at once quite alarmed, and announced that there were two Austrians at the door, with an order to be billeted in the house. "Oh! this is too much," said Madame Diétry; "receive them, sir, I beg of you; have a room prepared for them in the same part of the house which you are in; make any arrangements you choose; I will retire, I do not wish to see them; I am afraid of them!" She retired

at once to her room, leaving me in a state of great embarrassment. I went to receive the new arrivals, who were in the anteroom. One of them was an officer of Hungarian hussars, the other a soldier, who seemed to be a servant. On seeing me, the officer handed me the billet for quarters, which was addressed to Monsieur Diétry, and said, "*Loquerisne latine?*" ("Do you speak Latin?") I answered him in the affirmative; he seemed delighted, and commenced to speak with so much volubility and such a strange accent that I could hardly understand him. I begged him to speak more slowly, which he did, and, thanks to the lesson in pronunciation which I had received the evening before from M. Hirtsch, I understood him perfectly. He informed me that he commanded a detachment of eight hussars, charged with the duty of bearing the orders of the commandant; four of his men were in constant attendance upon that officer, ready to carry his orders wherever it might be necessary; the other four were off duty half the time, and were lodged with their horses in the next house to ours; but there was no room for him in that house, nor for his horse in the stable, and he had therefore asked to be lodged in our house, as he knew

that we had a stable where his horse could be kept. He begged that he might have a room fronting on the street, and that the door might be kept constantly open, as he was liable to be called upon at any hour of the day or night to receive or to send off messengers.

After having given me this information he asked to be shown the stable. I went with him, and after seeing it, he said, "It was a pity that it would not hold five horses; it is clean and more convenient than the one next door; but it will easily accommodate three."

"But then," said I, "where will the master of the house, the receiver of taxes (laying stress upon this word), stable his horses?"

"Ah! the receiver then has horses! Where are they?"

"He is using them at present in his service, and I am expecting his return every instant; and I am somewhat astonished that they should have billeted you on us, with your horse, as all this is well known at the mayor's office."

"Nothing was said to me about it; in any event, there will be room enough for mine. It is not likely, however, that I shall be here long; for I expect that we shall go to-mor-

row to Roulans, which our advance-guard reached to-day."

The prospect of an early departure removed my objection. I showed him to his room, which appeared to suit him, and turning to his hussar, who had followed us closely, he addressed him in Hungarian, and he retired immediately, returning in a few moments, bringing with him the horse of the officer, who went in person to superintend his accommodations in the stable.

Monsieur Diétry had on hand a small supply of hay and oats. The hussar filled the rack with hay and put some oats in the manger, and made up a good bed for the horse in the stable; then, on the order of his officer, he stacked up several bundles of straw in one corner of the stable.

"There," said the officer, "is the bed of my soldier: you need not trouble yourself to furnish him with any other."

After having made all these little arrangements he said to me, "A horseman ought always to take care of his horse first; after he has done that, he may think of himself. Now, that my beast has been provided for, I beg that you will have some breakfast got ready for me."

I sent word to the cook, and conducted my guest to the dining-room. The breakfast was soon served, and the table was set for three people. "Is this third place for the wife of the receiver?" said the Hungarian; "for if it is, it would be proper to wait for her before we take our seats at the table."

"I rather think not," said I, surprised at his courtesy; "for she is not at all well, and does not leave her own room." "Is this place for madame?" said I to the servant.

"No, sir; but as I saw three military men, I thought that they would need to be served."

I translated to him the girl's answer, but he understood me to mean that I had given the order that the soldier would eat with us.

The officer, who, until now, had seemed to me gentle and polite enough, suddenly changed his whole tone and manner. He turned red in the face, his eyes flashed, and then with a voice excited with anger, he said to me, "For whom do you take me, sir? Do you wish to insult me by making my hussar sit at table with me? Do you know that I am a nobleman, that I belong to the illustrious family of the Esterhazys, and that the man whom you would set at table with us, is only a slave, a serf of my father?"

And even if you could not recognize my quality as a gentleman, because it is not written on my face, you might at least have taken notice of rank, the signs of which are sufficiently indicated by my uniform. Are you so little learned in France with regard to military usages as not to know that a quarter-master ought not to sit at table with a common soldier?"

I was completely stunned with this querulousness. I hardly knew whether to laugh or get angry with him. But as soon as I saw that his bad temper was real, not being in very good humor myself, I lost command of my own temper, and said to him that I did not understand why he should find fault with me for the very pardonable mistake of a servant, who did not know how to distinguish military ranks, and that as a true gentleman he should have made light of such a mistake, rather than get angry at it.

"What," said he, striking his sabre violently against the floor, "do you mean to say that I am not a gentleman?"

"I say nothing of the kind; I only say that you do not behave like a true gentleman."

"And you would, no doubt, like to give me some lessons on this subject? It would be

curious, indeed, to see a Frenchman, filled with extraordinary notions of equality; a Frenchman brought up in a school where the assassination of kings is taught; where nobles and priests are brought to the scaffold; where all authority, human and divine, is set at naught; yes, it would be strange to see a Frenchman give lessons in propriety and manners to a descendant of the Esterhazys!"

By the time he had finished speaking, he had raised his voice to its loudest tone, and interlarded his language with a string of oaths. Madame Diétry heard the noise in her room, and sent her maid to see what was the matter. I told her it was nothing, and bade her go and calm her mistress' fears.

When the girl had retired, I said to him in a low voice, and quite calmly, "Sir, I have never known any thing of the revolutionary school of which you speak, and which disappeared from the soil of France with the reign of terror to which you have just alluded. It is no revolutionist who assumes to give you a lesson, but a French gentleman who repeats that it is not proper even for a descendant of the Esterhazys to lose his temper as you do, without cause, and to disturb, by your loud

voice, the quiet of a sick woman, whose roof offers you hospitality. Now, sir, I have said what I wish, and if my language displeases you, I am ready to give you any satisfaction usual among men of honor, taking care especially to produce no disturbance and to give no scandal."

He listened to me quietly until I had finished, and what I said to him about my position as a gentleman seemed to calm him down; but my conclusion was not at all to his liking.

"What, then, sir," said he, but this time without raising his voice, "do you mean to propose a duel with me? This is another French peculiarity that appeals to the sword for the slightest word. Know, sir, that the laws of my sovereign expressly forbid me from sending or accepting a challenge, and I do not intend to break the orders of my emperor to please you."

"You deserve praise, sir, for your deference to the laws of your country; and since you are so obedient to them, it is to be regretted that there is none of them which forbids your being insolent." On saying these words, I quit the room, closed the door, and left him to eat his breakfast alone.

My exasperation can hardly be described.

This was the first time in the whole course of my life that I had even given a challenge to any one, or ever offered any provocation to a living being, but at the moment, I had lost all control of myself. If it had not been from consideration for Madame Diétry, I should have carried to extremes my quarrel with the descendant of the Esterhazys, without thinking of the disagreeable or fatal consequences even, which my anger might have occasioned.

Such, my children, is the effect of passion; it deprives us of the use of our reason, and exposes us to commit actions which often cause bitter regret, sometimes terrible remorse.

I went out of the house without knowing where I was going, revolving in my mind the most sinister designs, when all of a sudden, on turning the corner of the street, I met the Abbé David. It was my good angel, whom God sent me in the guise of this worthy ecclesiastic. He saw at once that I was troubled, and asked me what was the matter. I told him the whole story, without disguising any thing, of what had happened to me. He listened to me attentively, and then, in a paternal way, which so became him, his words full of sense, and tempered with moderation and amiability,

and with the authority of religion which he knew how to employ so appropriately, by degrees he quieted my feelings and finally made me ashamed of what I had done.

As soon as he saw me more amenable to reason, he said to me, "We must now take care that no further evil result from this matter, especially as far as Madame Diétry's quiet is concerned. I was just going to the mayor's, to speak to him about the store-house for the forage. I will at the same time see the commandant, who is lodged with him, and ask him to change the quarters of this officer at once."

I was going to offer to accompany him, in order to ask the mayor to exempt me from the night service at his office until after M. Diétry's return, when we were interrupted by the sound of the Austrian drums beating the assembly, and of their trumpets sounding to saddle. At the same time, we saw men and officers, horse and foot, running in all haste to their quarters. We asked some of the people of the town who passed by us, if they knew the reason of this movement. They told us that they understood that the French were advancing toward the place. The Austrian hussars,

who had penetrated as far as Roulans, found that town occupied by a strong detachment, who fired upon them, and they returned in all haste to give the alarm.

While we were receiving this information, and in less time than it takes to tell it, the Austrians had taken up their arms, and were mustering on the little square where I had seen them a few hours before under inspection. At the same moment, my officer of hussars at the head of his eight soldiers passed by us at a gallop toward the road to Besançon. He did not see me, or at least did not appear to.

"It is probable," said the abbé to me, "that you will not see him again to-night; but let us go to the mayor's, to find out exactly what is going on."

We were only a few steps off, and soon reached there. The poor magistrate was in great distress. Not only did he confirm the news which we had just received, but he told us that the French were advancing in force, and that the Austrian commander had resolved to defend himself in the town.

"So you see," added he, "that what I was most afraid of is going to happen: there will be

a fight in our city. What a terrible misfortune for us !”

The Abbé David tried in vain to quiet him. Finding that he could not succeed, we both withdrew. As I was going away, I said to the mayor, “ From what is going on, I suppose you will hardly have need of my services to-night.”

“ No,” said he, “ I wished you to assist in distributing the requisitions among the different communes ; but the commandant told me, as he was leaving, to suspend this work for the present.”

“ I should think so,” replied I, smiling ; “ for if the requisitions were filled, the French would get the benefit of them.”

I was far from experiencing the uneasiness of the mayor.

I returned home much gayer than when I went away. Madame Diétry, who had heard of the precipitate flight of the Austrians, felt herself relieved from a great weight, as she told me, although she felt as I did, that we should soon see them back again. She could not help laughing at the haste in which the officer had quitted the table without even stopping to finish his breakfast.

She asked me the particulars of the quarrel

which we had had, and which had caused her so much alarm. When I told her the story, she could not get over the frivolousness of the cause which had provoked it, or of the aristocratic touchiness of the self-styled descendant of the Esterhazys. How, indeed, was it possible for a man who really belonged to that noble family to carry the spirit of caste to such a foolish extent!

"It is true," said she, "that in that country, as in Poland and Russia, the serfs are still regarded by the nobility as hardly human beings. But let us forget our illustrious Magyar, whom we shall probably never see again, and tell me what it was that caused our guests to depart so suddenly."

I told her what I had heard, taking care not to inform her of the fears of the mayor.

"But do you not think," said she, "that they will have a fight?"

"Not likely," said I. "Now that the French are returning in force, the Austrians will vacate the place, until a contrary movement shall bring them back. There may be some shots fired, on one side or the other, for form's sake merely; but I have no idea there will be a serious engagement."

"May God grant it! for the very thought of it makes me tremble. But if there is no fighting, I shall not be sorry to see the French come back, if only for a short time, as I may perhaps get some news of my husband."

"But perhaps, madame, you may see himself; for if the French come as far as this, the road will be completely open for his return."

"You are quite right. How this hope restores me! You seem to give me a new life, . . . and to restore my appetite," added she gayly. "Come, let us go and breakfast, in place of the noble Esterhazy. . . . Aglaé, come, my daughter, let us breakfast with Monsieur de Villette, and thank him for the good news which he has just given me."

"What news, aunt?"

"That we may soon perhaps see your uncle back again."

"O what happiness!" cried Aglaé joyously. And we sat down to breakfast, feeling better than we had done for many days.

CHAPTER VI.

ARRIVAL OF MONSIEUR DIÉTRY.

WE were finishing our meal and were enjoying the good humor of Aglaé, who did not cease to repeat, "If my uncle will only come back before New-Year's day, to give me my presents, and hear me recite the beautiful compliment which my aunt has taught me!" when the cook came in, in great alarm, and said to us, "Do you not hear the noise of the musketry? There is fighting on the road to Besançon. I have just heard it at the well, and from the kitchen I distinctly heard the firing."

We listened attentively, but heard nothing. I opened the window, and then heard some distant sounds, very indistinct. "If that is the report of musketry," said I, "it is a long way off, and not very rapid."

Just as I was going to shut the window, platoon-firing was distinctly heard much closer by, and a rapid fusilade followed immediately, coming nearer and nearer,

“It is too true,” said Madame Diétry, “there is fighting in the town. . . . We were too gay just now. Merciful heaven! what will become of us?”

“Madame, keep calm, I beg of you: go to your room with Mademoiselle Aglaé. I will go up to the top of the house, where there is a lookout in the direction of the Besançon road; I will be able to see what is going on, and will let you know.”

“Above all, sir,” exclaimed Mademoiselle Aglaé, “do not take it into your head to leave us, as you did the other day, to run after the soldiers; for if you do, our treaty of peace will be broken, and we will resume hostilities.”

“Do not be uneasy, mademoiselle, I will not go out without your leave.” I took a spy-glass and went up to the look-out. The fusilade was still going on, and was only momentarily interrupted to be renewed with greater effect. The smoke in the direction whence it came prevented me at first from distinguishing anything; but at length the firing slackened a little, and I saw that the Austrians had closed the entrance to the street, by a sort of barricade made of carts and wagons, with pieces of wood and plank, thrown across them. About

two hundred men were intrenched behind this barricade, and it was from them that proceeded the firing which I had heard. Other troops were stationed in the gardens and houses adjoining on both sides of the principal entrance, to prevent their position from being turned. The French, whom I could not see, were firing from the vineyards, and replied vigorously to the guns of the enemy. Without being much of a tactician, I could easily see that all this work was more noisy than effective, and that it might go on a good while longer, without doing much harm to either side.

Just as I had come to this conclusion, I noticed two flashes through the smoke which hung over the road; at the same instant, the planks, logs, and carts of the barricade flew in every direction, and I heard the explosion of two heavy cannon. At the same moment, there was quite a movement among the Austrian soldiers behind the intrenchments; five or six of them had fallen wounded by the splinters; the others commenced to fly, when I distinctly saw the officers, with the flat of their sabres, drive them back to their places; but a second discharge of artillery more terrible than the first put them completely to rout. This time

the officers did not even attempt to stop them, and they were borne along with them in the rout. Those who were placed on the right and left flanks in the gardens and houses hastened to rejoin their flying comrades. As soon as the Austrians had commenced to retreat, the French soldiers scaled the barricade and pursued them. They had two drums with them, which beat a charge which I heard distinctly. At this sight, I could not help crying out "Bravo, comrades !" and clapped my hands as if they could hear me. A bend in the street soon shut the combatants out from my sight. The firing had ceased, or was only heard at long intervals ; but the tumult increased every minute, and the continued beating of the charge announced that friends and enemies had both entered the town. I hurried down from my observatory, and gave an account of what I had seen to Madame Diétry. " Now," said I, " that the Austrians are completely routed, it is not probable that they will rally in the city, or that they will attempt any further resistance." I returned to my room, whence I could perceive what was going on in the street. I saw the Austrians flying in the greatest disorder ; a hundred paces behind them, I noticed five

French voltigeurs, their faces blackened with powder, pursuing them hotly, while the two drummers kept on beating the charge most furiously. The soldiers loaded their muskets as they advanced, and fired upon the enemy at every favorable opportunity.

I was expecting to see the rest of the battalions follow these five brave fellows, and was not a little surprised that they were alone in the pursuit of at least four hundred men. They continued to harass them until they had left the town. The Austrians continued their flight, until they had rejoined several companies of their men on a small eminence called the Old Oak, which was made a rallying-point. Our five voltigeurs and the two drummers returned quietly into the city, amidst the congratulations of the inhabitants, who offered them refreshments on all sides, and they soon rejoined their comrades. It seems that the French soldiers who numbered only about three hundred men, had halted at the entrance to the street; but the five voltigeurs and the two drummers, carried away by their impetuosity, had not heard the order and had continued the pursuit. As soon as the inhabitants learned that the French were quartered in the town, they hastened to

supply them with bread and provisions ; they could not have been treated more kindly if they had been brothers just returning after a long absence ; no one seemed to remember that the enemy was near by, and that at any moment he might return in force.

The remnants of the barricade which the Austrians had erected were removed outside the town, and with the addition of some barrels of earth, an intrenchment was constructed, sentries were placed, and the French were relieved from all danger of being surprised by the enemy, whose every movement was closely watched by the inhabitants themselves, who kept our soldiers informed.

Nor did the Austrians themselves seem at all disposed to re-enter the town. They continued to occupy their position at the Old Oak, as if awaiting reinforcements before undertaking any thing. The French, too, were in the same expectation, so that it was quite probable that the next engagement which might take place would be much more serious than any that had preceded it.

Night came on without any change in the position of affairs. The town, no longer occu-

pied by the military, was quiet, but agitated in expectation of what might follow.

I awoke the next morning betimes. I listened attentively, expecting to hear the noise of fire-arms ; but to my great astonishment every thing was quiet. I arose, awaiting with impatience the coming day, that I might go out ; for it was still so dark that I did not think it prudent to risk myself on the streets.

At length, shortly after seven o'clock, the darkness of the night wore away (it was the thirty-first day of December) ; I went out into the street, and before long I heard the noise of fire-arms, but some distance off, and in the direction of the Belfort road. "Well," said I to myself, "if there is any fighting going on, it is outside of the city." I hastened to the point where the French had taken up their quarters ; but there was nobody left there, and the barricade had disappeared. I learned, however, that the French, having been reinforced during the night, had divided themselves into two bands. One of them, guided by some of the country people who were familiar with the roads, had made a long detour for the purpose of surprising the enemy in their position at the Old Oak ; the other, having destroyed the barricade,

marched silently across the city, and took up a position on the Belfort road, to await the commencement of the attack by the first detachment, and then to advance to its support, and place the enemy between two fires.

This manœuvre turned out a perfect success, as we afterward learned. The enemy, taken by surprise, did not even endeavor to defend himself, but had fled in every direction, and our soldiers took about a hundred prisoners.

I hurried back to carry home this good news. Just as I was going to open the door, I heard the rapid approach of a horse which seemed to follow me. I turned about and saw a horseman enveloped in a large cloak, which concealed his face; when within a few paces, he checked his horse and dismounted, saying to me, "Good morning, Monsieur de Villette, how is my wife?"

It was Monsieur Diétry. I rushed into his arms; he embraced me with all the tenderness of a father, and repeated his inquiries as to his wife.

"She is well," said I, "but your prolonged absence has greatly disquieted her, and if you had stayed away much longer, her health might

have suffered ; but now that you are here, she will soon be well again."

The servant-girl was not much less surprised than myself when she saw M. Diétry. "I will hasten," said she, "at once to awaken madame."

"No, no," said M. Diétry, "let her sleep on."

"Let her sleep, indeed!" said she; "she would drive me from the house if I were to play her such a trick as that."

And she ran off to arouse her mistress.

The return of M. Diétry brought back joy to the household. It relieved me from great responsibility, and gave me at length the opportunity of obeying the impulse of my filial affection, without exposing me to the reproach of ingratitude to my benefactors.

That morning, breakfast was a scene of charming delight; nobody could have supposed that we were in the midst of war, and that fighting was going on in the environs of the town. Madame Diétry told her husband all that she had done during his absence; the part she had taken in concealing at the college the most valuable of her effects, and the little fortune of Aglaé. She spoke of what I had done in this matter, and of the care and trouble which I had

taken to accomplish the object. Monsieur Diétry approved of all his wife had done, and thanked me sincerely for the assistance I had rendered. He asked me all sorts of questions about the position of the hiding-place, if it was quite dry, so that there was no fear that the dampness might injure the papers which had been placed in it. He was satisfied with my answers to all his questions.

Monsieur Diétry then told us all about his visit to Besançon, and the inconveniences he had suffered. He congratulated himself that he had not taken his wife and niece with him; for the city was full of strangers; that besides the difficulty of finding suitable lodgings, if the siege was prolonged, there would soon be a lack of provisions, besides the danger of a bombardment, and of the attacks to which the city would be exposed from the enemy. Several officers of his acquaintance had advised him not to remain in the place, and to one of these, the aid-de-camp of General Marulaz, he owed the obligation of having been enabled to return to his family, thanks to the excursion which that general made in this direction.

“Then,” said I, “General Marulaz is here?”

“Yes,” said Monsieur Diétry, “he is in com-

mand of this expedition, which is only a reconnoissance undertaken especially to improve his young soldiers, and accustom them to fire."

"And do you think the general will remain here long?"

"It is likely he will remain all night, but will return to-morrow morning to Besançon with his whole command; not from any apprehension of the enemy at present on the road, whom he is perfectly able to cope with; but he is aware that another considerable corps is now crossing the mountains, and advancing in this direction to encircle Besançon from this side, so that if he should lose too much time in returning, he might be cut off. But in a few hours we shall know something positive as to what he has resolved upon; for his aid-de-camp will be here to get the horse which he lent me."

"How lent you?" said Madame Diétry, "and what have you done with your own horses?"

"I sold them both, as I had no need of them at the moment; and besides, I did not wish the Austrians to take them by force, in which case I should never have seen them again."

"Then," said I, "if the descendant of the

Esterhazys should come back this way, he will want to put his three horses in your stable."

"What descendant of the Esterhazys are you talking about?"

I told him of the quarrel I had had the evening before with the quarter-master of hus-sars, at which he was much amused.

By the time breakfast was over, we heard the French drums beating a march.

"Here come our troops," said Monsieur Diétry, "let us go out and look at them."

This suited me exactly, and Madame Diétry and Aglaé were anxious to go with us.

"I may not soon have another opportunity," said madame to her husband, "to see French soldiers, so let me profit by this one."

We went out to the little square of which I have before spoken, where the marching detachments were usually halted to receive their billets for quarters, which were then being distributed to the soldiers, as if they had just come in from a neighboring station, and not from the pursuit of the enemy.

The clang of trumpets soon announced the arrival of the cavalry and of the staff.

The general dismounted at the house of a friend, a rich land-holder whom he had known

a long time, and with whom he had served during the first years of the revolution. Monsieur Diétry invited the aid-de-camp who had loaned him his horse, to come and take up quarters with him.

“ I can not,” said he, “ I must remain with the general ; but I will come this evening, and pay you a visit.”

I noticed that the cavalry was much more numerous than that which Colonel Faudoas had commanded at the time of the first reconnoissance made by him ; there were at least three hundred of them, and the prisoners taken in the affair of the morning had been captured by the chasseurs, and one of these detachments were now escorting them into the town. They were quartered at the college where they had before had their barracks, and with the exception of the guard placed to watch them, the rest of the French officers and soldiers were lodged among the people of the town.

After the chasseurs, followed the country wagons, carrying about fifty wounded, who were immediately taken to the hospital, and two others filled with muskets, sabres, cartouche-boxes, and bundles of cartridges taken from the prisoners.

CHAPTER VII.

CORRESPONDENCE—THE RETURN OF THE AUSTRILIANS—A VISIT TO THE COLLEGE BARRACKS—THE HIDING-PLACE.

I MADE up my mind to take advantage of the return of the French to undertake a journey to Orleans, but an unexpected occurrence put a stop to my plans. The courier, whose service had been interrupted for four or five days, had taken advantage of the French movement to resume his duties, and among the letters which he brought was one from my mother for me. You may imagine with what eagerness I opened it.

She assured me, in the first place, of her good health. She was living, in a very quiet way, in one of the most retired streets of Orleans, where she was free from all noise. She never went out except to church, or once in a while to visit one of her friends. Thus she was quiet enough, and would have

given herself but little concern about peace or war, if she had not feared that I might be exposed to dangers in consequence of the misfortunes which France was suffering. She was anxious to have me with her during this critical period; but she was alarmed lest I might be compelled to enter the service, notwithstanding my exemption as the son of a widow. Every day, young men were forced to join the ranks who were fully entitled to exemption, some of whom even had procured substitutes. These were not enrolled, it is true, in the regiments; but were obliged to serve in the National Guard, which was just as likely to be exposed to fight as the troops of the line.

“I have heard,” added this good mother, “that on the frontiers where you are, they are not so strict in compelling service, and that it is easier to get clear of it, either by changing your residence or passing over the frontier; but do nothing without consulting Monsieur Diétry; he is a man of great prudence, and will give you good advice, and he has for you all the tenderness of a father. Listen to him, and when you have come to any conclusion, try and let me know what it is. I will endeavor to reconcile myself to it, and ask resig-

nation of Almighty God. What a sad time when a mother is obliged to be deprived of the presence of her only child !”

I showed this letter to Monsieur Diétry. “Well,” said he, “there is no room for doubt. The danger which your mother alludes to is greater than she probably thinks. You could hardly remain long with her without being enrolled in the National Guard for home service at first, and then for some marching battalion. Here you have nothing to fear. The country is invaded, and the authority of the French government can no longer be enforced. Quiet her fears as to your position. Tell her that you are in no danger of a forced enrollment of any kind, and that you will remain in our midst, where you will be treated like one of the family.”

I expressed my gratitude to Monsieur Diétry, and told him that I would follow his advice. I wrote at once a long letter to my mother, and, my mind being at rest on that subject, I quietly awaited the order of events.

The French departed the next day (the 1st of January, 1814), as they had announced ; but their departure was not followed immediately by the return of the Austrians, as we had

expected. On the 4th of January, however, they arrived in force by three different routes. First, by the Clerval road, came our old acquaintances, the hussars of Esterhazy, and the infantry who had been so well treated at the Old Oak. The first only passed through the town without stopping; the latter went immediately to their old quarters in the college. At the same time, a second column, composed of dragoons and Hungarian grenadiers, debouched by the old Belfort road, a road which had been for some time abandoned, which was not in order, and which served only for local travel; they followed the hussars, and marched on toward Besançon.

So far it was supposed that we would be exempted from having any of them quartered upon us; but, about two o'clock in the afternoon, a third column, two or three times as large as both the others together, arrived from a direction which we did not expect. They came down from the mountains by the way of Ornans, over a mountain road badly laid out, difficult at any season, and impracticable in winter. This column was a part of the corps commanded by Prince Louis de Lichtenstein, destined to invest Besançon. It was composed

of cavalry and infantry, followed by artillery, which it had brought along, I know not how, over the frightful roads across the mountain. We were called upon to make immediate provision in a little town, the population of which did not exceed twenty-five hundred souls, to lodge and feed this whole column, which amounted to more than three thousand men and twelve hundred horses. We were obliged to crowd the soldiers into the houses in tens and twenties and sometimes even thirty together. Notwithstanding the good discipline which the commandant had so much lauded during the dinner at the college, there was considerable disorder that night. More than one of the citizens was personally maltreated, and had to submit to the pillaging of all the stores provided for his family.

The houses in which the officers were lodged had less to complain of. On the arrival of the first column, a lieutenant presented himself at M. Diétry's house with a billet for quarters; it was my old acquaintance, Monsieur Hirtsch. I presented him to Monsieur and Madame Diétry, who received him very graciously, at which he appeared enchanted. At breakfast he showed himself very amiable, not-

withstanding his rough voice, which quite frightened Mademoiselle Aglaé. I acted as his interpreter; for Monsieur Diétry, whose Latin was a little rusty, could not follow our conversation. I inquired about the commandant and Captain Mayer. He informed me that the commandant had been disgraced for having allowed himself to be surprised on the 31st of December. It was said that he was guilty of treason, and that he would probably be court-martialed.

“Treason!” said I, with astonishment.

“Yes, treason,” said he; “and the accusation seems to be all the better founded, as he is a Frenchman, and many of the German officers were quite jealous of him. He was brought up in a French military school, served in the armies of Napoleon, and was, I think, a lieutenant in 1806 and 1807. Then he went into the Austrian service, where his promotion was rapid.”

“Then he first deserted his own flag, and the accusation brought against him now is only a just punishment for his first treason. But let us say no more about this man, whom I at first thought worthy of esteem, and whom I now

despise. Tell me about Captain Mayer. Is he here?"

"Alas! no. The poor captain was wounded in the affair of the 31st. He had his arm broken by a musket-ball; but this did not prevent him from riding three or four leagues at a gallop to escape being taken prisoner, which he succeeded in doing, though the great fatigue made his wound quite dangerous, and he will probably have to suffer amputation."

"So it is," said he, with a sigh. "Who knows but the same fate may be reserved for me? These are the chances of war."

Lieutenant Hirtsch had been allotted the finest room in the house. A nice fire was burning in it, and when I led him to his room, he pressed my hand, and begged me to say to Monsieur and Madame Diétry that he had never regretted that he could not speak French so much as at that moment, in order to express to them in person his gratitude.

When I delivered his message to Madame Diétry, Aglaé said gayly, "Well, well, that is not so bad for a Dutchman. See what it is to have breathed a little French air! How soon it makes a man agreeable and gallant! I am sure he would never get such notions on the

other side of the Rhine. It is a great pity, however, that your Mr. Hirtsch has got such a sepulchral voice, and that his name is so much like a sneeze."

We all burst out laughing at this sally, and congratulated ourselves on having such a guest, whom we hoped we might keep some time.

On the arrival of the column from the mountains, we were obliged to receive two other officers, a major and a captain, with servants and horses. The two new-comers spoke French very well, though with a German accent. As soon as they learned that one of their officers was in the house, and that he was only a lieutenant, they begged me to notify him of their arrival. I went at once to inform Mr. Hirtsch of this circumstance. I found him lolling in a large arm-chair, smoking a huge wooden pipe, and regaling himself with some old brandy, a bottle of which had been placed on his mantelpiece. He seemed to be quite put out at the arrival of these gentlemen. He uttered a few *der teufels* and some *tausends*, and took his pipe from his mouth with some anger. I begged him to explain the cause of his excitement, and wanted to know why he seemed to

be so disturbed by the arrival of his countrymen.

“You can not comprehend it,” said he; “but I know too well that the message which these gentlemen send may be translated as follows: ‘Lieutenant, give up your room to us, and go and lodge wherever else you can.’”

“Do you really think they will do that?” said I.

“You will see.”

We went down into the drawing-room, where I had left the officers. They were busy examining the next room, which Monsieur Diétry intended for one of them, but which was not as good as that of Mr. Hirtsch.

“Gentlemen,” said I to them, “here is Lieutenant Hirtsch, who comes to present his respects.”

They turned around and made but a slight acknowledgment of the profound obeisance of the lieutenant. Their conversation with each other was in German, and they went together into the room which M. Diétry had just shown them, and afterward the lieutenant showed them his, and they then returned to the drawing-room, where the Major said to Monsieur Diétry, “The lieutenant has offered me his

room, which suits me nicely ; the captain will take the one which you have just shown us ; Mr. Hirtsch says that he will go and lodge in the barracks."

" But," said I, looking at Monsieur Diétry, " there is still the room which the quartermaster of hussars occupied, and which will answer for Mr. Hirtsch."

" That is already disposed of," said M. Diétry, " for the major's secretary."

I went to look after the lieutenant, who was getting ready to go. " I told you as much," said he, as soon as he saw me. " The presence of these gentlemen was a signal for me to get out that they might get in."

" But, from what the major said, you offered him your room."

" So I did," said he, " but only to avoid having it taken from me. You can readily understand that it would hardly be proper that a superior officer should occupy a comparatively poor room, whilst his subordinate should have a magnificent apartment in the same house."

" I am quite put out at your departure," said I, when I saw him, with his cloak on his shoulders, on the point of leaving ; " and if you can not do better, I shall be very glad to offer

you half of my bachelor's quarters. A night is soon over, and you know the proverb, 'One must suit one's self to the times.'"

"I thank you," said he, pressing my hand warmly. "I thank you, my fine fellow; but what these gentlemen wish is, that I shall quit the house, and not occupy a seat at table with them. We do not belong to the same regiment, or even to the same division. They often have private matters to talk about, and a stranger, especially a subordinate officer of another corps, might embarrass them. I have no alternative but to submit to what I can not help. I will try and find the principal of the college who entertained us so handsomely the other day. Perhaps my little room is still empty; but, in any event, he will find some little corner in which he can spread a bundle of straw to make me a bed."

"Well," said I, "I will go with you; and if you do not find a lodging there, you can come back with me to my room." And so we went off together to the college.

The sentry presented arms to the lieutenant when we arrived at the door. Returning his salute, we noticed that the soldier did not

belong to his regiment. He spoke to him in German, and the sentry answered briefly.

“He does not even know,” said he, “if my detachment is here. I wonder if my soldiers have been turned out to make room for these new-comers.”

He went into the yard. There were from eight to nine hundred men, Germans, Bohemians, Hungarians, Croatians, speaking, or rather screaming, each one in his own tongue. In the midst of this crowd Mr. Hirtsch noticed some of the soldiers of his regiment. He approached them, and learned that his detachment of three hundred men had not left the college, but that this establishment had just received, first, a battalion of Hungarian grenadiers; secondly, half a battalion of Bohemian sharpshooters; thirdly, three hundred Croatian infantry; and fourthly, three companies of Tyrolean chasseurs—in all, about eighteen hundred men, who, added to the three hundred of the lieutenant’s regiment, amounted to more than two thousand souls.

“It strikes me,” said I to the lieutenant, “that it is hardly worth while to importune the good abbé, and that you had better return to my room. But first I should like to see how they

manage to lodge ten men where there is only room for one, and as I would hardly be permitted to make that kind of inspection alone, will you be good enough to act as my guide?"

"Most willingly," answered the lieutenant, "especially as I should like to know where my men have been quartered in the midst of such a medley."

We traversed the court, and found his three hundred men occupying the large and small refectories. An officer, one of the lieutenant's comrades, was busy at the moment in arranging them very much like herrings in a barrel. He had ordered some straw laid over the tiles of the refectory; on this his men were to lie in the same order which they occupied in their companies, with their heads along the wall, and their feet toward the middle of the room. Each one had his knapsack for a pillow. Two long tables, parallel to each other, occupied the whole length of the refectories. By this arrangement, the space between the tables and the wall was filled with soldiers, whose legs stretched under the tables, which were also turned to good account, and which were covered with mattresses, taken from the dormitories, destined for the subaltern officers as beds of honor. The space

between the two tables remained vacant, so as to leave room to move about from one end of the room to the other.

The officer who had superintended this arrangement spoke French. I complimented him upon the manner in which he had economized space. "A naval officer," said I, "could not have done better."

"But why have you not used the kitchen at the end of the large refectory? You might have lodged there a considerable number of men, which would have given some relief to these."

"The kitchen," said he, "that is for our guard-room; come and see it, I beg of you, and then tell me if you think it would be possible to lodge a single man there."

He preceded us, and opened the door between the refectory and the kitchen. The suffocating and nauseous air which escaped through it caused me to hesitate. Such a mixture of tobacco-smoke, of broiling meat, of wet clothes put to dry, gave forth an indescribable smell enough to suffocate one. The sight which presented itself was curious to behold.

In front of the great chimney, in which half a cord of wood was burning, was seated a

crowd of soldiers ranged in a semi-circle; every one had a pipe in his mouth; some of them were roasting their meat upon the coals, others were drying their overcoats and other garments of very doubtful cleanliness.

The kitchen table was surrounded with a double circle of soldiers, some standing, some sitting, busy eating and drinking. Those who were standing up used their forks and spoons over the heads of those who were seated, very much resembling the position of soldiers in firing, the front rank kneeling on the ground that those behind may fire over their heads.

Behind the table opposite to the fire-place, some thirty of them were lying down, a part already snoring, and others smoking their execrable tobacco, without seeming to mind the risk they ran of setting fire to the straw on which they were lying.

As soon as the two officers appeared, all those who were either sitting or lying down rose up except the sleepers; the duties of the forks and spoons were suspended, and the pipes stopped exhaling their fetid smoke. The lieutenant addressed some words to a subaltern, who seemed to be the chief of the post: in the mean time I cast my eyes about, and noticed

the seats which these men had occupied, and which I had not observed until they got up from them. There were trunks, cases, and boxes of every shape and size, with now and then a bench or a chair. On seeing this strange medley, a sudden thought came into my head. Could they have discovered our hiding-place, and taken these things out of it? A little reflection satisfied me on this point. If they had committed this theft, said I, they would hardly display their booty so publicly.

We left this pestiferous apartment, and went through some other parts of the building. The class-rooms, the study-halls, the dormitories, and even the corridors were all in the same state of disorder. As we were going along, Mr. Hirtsch said to me, "I thank you again for your kind offer; but I have just learnt that Captain Mayer's apartment is empty, and that I might take it. I will go and inquire about it of the principal."

We went together and found the good abbé reading his breviary, just as quietly as if his college was still occupied by his students, and had not been invaded by more than two thousand foreign soldiers.

After hearing the request of the lieutenant, "The room is indeed vacant," he said, "but I am reserving it for Captain Mayer, who requested me, the other day, as he was going away, to keep it for him, and I have just told one of the officers of the troops which arrived this evening that it was occupied."

Mr. Hirtsch then informed him that the captain would not return on account of the accident which he had met with.

"Then," said the abbé, with his accustomed gentleness, "you are Captain Mayer's lieutenant, and as such are entitled to his place so far as the room is concerned, as well as at table and at the head of your company. So here are the keys of your room, which take possession of while I finish my breviary. And don't forget to come back in time for dinner, and if M. de Villette," turning toward me, "will make one of us, he will give us great pleasure."

"Thank you," said I, "I will be very glad to help my patron entertain some of his guests." And I bowed to the lieutenant as he was going out, making a sign to the abbé at the same time that I had something to say to him. As soon as we were alone, I communicated to him

what I had seen in the kitchen of the college, and made known my suspicions.

“That is only another effort of your imagination,” said he; “set your mind at rest, nothing has been disturbed.”

“But,” replied I, “is it not possible that in the confusion which the gathering together of two thousand men would cause, some of them may have found their way to the top of the church without your notice?”

“It does not seem to me to be possible, but to convince yourself, let us go and see.”

“It hardly appears to be worth while, Monsieur l’Abbé,” said I, “and since you are so sure——”

“That is hardly enough. I know you so well, and you may still have some doubts: so come along with me, disciple of St. Thomas, and see for yourself.”

He took me with him to the roof of the chapel, where every thing remained undisturbed.

“Now,” said he, “try and find the entrance to the hiding-place.”

I looked for a long time, and after having carefully examined the whole face of the wall, I was satisfied that it was impossible to discover any difference in any part of it; but I

pointed out the spot where I thought the opening had been.

“ You are about a metre out of the way,” said he: “ take this cord and measure from the angle of the wall, until you come to a knot somewhere about the middle of it.”

“ I have the knot,” said I, after having done what he directed me.

“ Well, then, that must be just about the middle of the hiding-place; I have no other way of finding it myself: are you satisfied now?”

I assured him that I hardly needed such proofs; but whence then came all those trunks, boxes, and other things, which so roused my suspicions?

“ There is nothing so remarkable about that,” said he, “ in a house like this, where there is always a quantity of such things out of use, which are put one side and forgotten. There was a loft over the wood-house where such things were kept, and the soldiers who went for wood have no doubt found them, and caused you this alarm.”

My fears were entirely removed by this explanation, taken together with what I had seen. And I went back home quite relieved from my anxiety on this subject.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE AUSTRIAN COMMISSARY—THE SCHLAGUE— ORGANIZED PILLAGE—NEWS OF THE WAR.

THE next day all the troops that had arrived by the mountain road marched off toward Besançon; but they were replaced by others about equal in number, and for three or four days these arrivals and departures went on without interruption. At length, when these troops had taken up the positions assigned to them, to complete the investment of Besançon, on the right side of the river Doubs, we had a little rest.

The head-quarters of Prince Lichtenstein, who commanded the corps employed to besiege Besançon, was established at Grand-Vaire, a town situated on the left bank of the Doubs at the foot of Mont Laumont, about ten kilometres from the city, and twenty from Baume.

A garrison of seven or eight hundred men

was stationed in our town, a part of which was lodged in the college, and the rest among the inhabitants, who, exhausted by the numbers of the last few weeks, could no longer supply their new guests with food. Provisions had therefore to be distributed among the soldiers, and store-houses were established for provisioning all the troops engaged in the siege on the right bank of the Doubs. The magazines for the troops on the left bank were established at Ornans.

A commissary, half civil, half military, took up his residence at Baume, charged with organizing the magazines, and with the issuing of requisitions upon the towns of the district. He established himself at the sub-prefecture, and expected to get the assistance of the employees of the office; but he found none—only an old man quite deaf, and a young errand-boy about fifteen years of age. He called upon the mayor and demanded that he should be furnished with clerks. The mayor in his turn called upon me, and this time there was no escape for me.

Thus it was that I became the chief clerk of the Austrian commissary, having for my assistants the old deaf employee, whom I have just spoken of, and the little errand-boy; after-

ward I was furnished with two assistants, one the clerk of a lawyer, the other of a notary. We five completed the French force of the office; the German part consisted of three Austrian soldiers with a sergeant at their head, who spoke and wrote French perfectly; he it was who acted as intermediary between the two departments, and I will do him the justice to say, that from the very first he did all he could to render our relations agreeable and lighten the burden of our service.

Notwithstanding his obliging disposition, I felt quite a repugnance for this man. The remembrance of the commandant who was a French deserter, was ever before me, and I could not persuade myself that this sergeant, who spoke our language so well, and whose name of Fresnel was so entirely French, was not also a deserter from our army.

Being a little curious on this subject, after a few days' acquaintance, when I had become a little more familiar with him, I asked him from what country he came, as I could not imagine he was a German, in consequence of the purity of his accent.

"Perhaps you think me a Frenchman," said he, smiling.

“ Well, the idea has often come into my head.”

“ I am neither a German nor a Frenchman,” said he ; “ I am Belgian.”

“ Then you are a Frenchman, since Belgium belongs to France.”

“ Yes, I am a Frenchman, just as the Poles, who fight in the French ranks, with the hope of one day obtaining the independence of their country, are Russians or Austrians. Listen, for a moment, to my history, and then decide if you can properly call me a Frenchman. When the republicans first conquered Belgium, and the National Convention declared the country reunited to France, the Belgians were not consulted ; the whole of them, at all events, did not acquiesce in the loss of their nationality, and these have never consented and never will consent to become Frenchmen. My father—for I was then only eight or ten years of age—my father was one of these ; he was attached to the household of the Archduke, the Governor of the Netherlands. He retired to Vienna with him ; and though I have always continued to speak and to study French, which is my mother-tongue, I have never ceased to long for the independence of my country and to see

her freed from the French yoke. And my hope in taking up arms to-day in the Austrian service is, that this war may result in driving France back to her old limits, and in giving back independence to those nations whom she has unjustly and violently united to her empire.

“Austria never dreamed of making us either Austrians or Germans. She left us our laws, our customs, our language, in a word, every thing that constitutes our distinct nationality. France, on the contrary, had no sooner invaded us than she overturned every thing; she commenced by destroying our old territorial divisions, and blotted out their names from the map.

“She suppressed our laws and our customs to impose upon us the French Code; she subjected us to the same imposts, direct and indirect, as the rest of France; finally, she forced upon us her system of conscription; in a word, she left us nothing that had been ours, not even our name, in order to amalgamate us more completely with the French empire.”

Though I did not agree with all these ideas of Fresnel, I could not but admit that there was a good deal of truth in what he had said,

and I felt within myself that, if I had been born a Belgian, I should have thought and reasoned just as he did. From that moment, I ceased to feel any repugnance toward him, and gave him my sympathies. He was well instructed and capable—above all, full of feeling and well disposed. The attachment which grew up between us lasted a long time after the occurrences which had given it birth.

Hitherto, I have said nothing about the principal personage, the chief of the expedition, who bore the title of Imperial Commissary and Intendant of His Majesty's Armies, the Baron Wolf. His name was significant, and fitted him exactly. It would have been difficult to find a worse man. He was sullen and grasping. He always spoke to us peevishly and as if in anger. Although he expressed himself well in French, except as to his accent, which was decidedly German, he rarely addressed us in that language; he gave us his orders in German, which were translated to us by Fresnel in his presence. He listened attentively to the interpretation, and if he did not think it suitably conveyed his idea, or that he had used an improper term, he would recom-

mence the translation himself, which he always rendered with precision and exactness.

One man alone possessed the gift of appeasing him, even in the midst of his greatest fury. This man was Fresnel. I know not what mysterious control he exercised over him; but it is sure that this wolf was turned into a lamb by a single look from the Belgian, with the addition of a few words which we did not understand, spoken in a low and quiet voice.

Thanks to my intimacy with Fresnel, and to the knowledge which I had of the population and wealth of the district, I was enabled to prevent many acts of injustice in allotting the requisitions, which the commissary often did himself in an arbitrary way, and according to an old table which he had found in the office of the sub-prefecture. I was also enabled to render some services to individuals, by which I was somewhat compensated for the vexations which I was subjected to as an Austrian clerk. My occupations at the office kept me employed the whole day, and I hardly saw the family except at meal-times. Almost every day, under the pretense of examining the condition of the forage store-house, I paid a visit to the college, and satisfied myself that our hiding-place

had not been molested. I redoubled my attention whenever there were any changes in the garrison. At the end of a fortnight, the detachment of Lieutenant Hirtsch was ordered off to the field ; it was replaced by a battalion of Tyrolese chasseurs, who were followed by a body of infantry. These changes took place once in ten or fifteen days, during the whole three months that the investment of Besançon lasted, and every one of them redoubled my anxiety for our treasure. My tranquillity was more than ever disturbed by hearing from time to time that various hiding-places in the town had been discovered and pillaged, and that the authors of these acts had in no case been discovered. Once or twice, some soldiers were detected with watches and jewelry in their possession, which had evidently been stolen. The commissary, who acted also as provost, took charge of the property, and ordered the soldiers on whom they had been found to receive five and twenty blows with the *Schlag*.* In spite of myself, I had to witness the infliction of this punishment, which, barbarous as it

* The word *Schlag*, in German, means a blow ; it is also used to designate the stick (*Stock*) which is used for this military punishment.

is, has been kept up in the Austrian army, and which is dealt out for the slightest faults, as well as the more grievous ones; the only difference being in the number of blows, which varies from five to fifty, and sometimes a hundred.

The punishment took place in the college-yard, precisely at the hour when I was in the habit of inspecting the forage store. Fresnel, whom I met, informed me of what was going on, and invited me to be present. I allowed myself to be influenced, partly not to refuse him, and partly from curiosity. There were three prisoners, and six corporals were provided to do the work. At the first blows, the victims uttered stifled groans, but some cried out piteously, which painfully affected me. I could not bear the sight, and turned away, followed for some time afterward by the groans which so excited my pity.

When I next saw Fresnel, he laughed at what he called my sensitiveness. "I was like you at first," said he; "but one gets accustomed to it, and now it makes no impression on me; there seems to be no other way of managing the Austrian soldiers. Extra duty or imprison-

ment, such as are adopted in France for such cases, would have no effect on them."

"It gives one," said I, "a low estimate of the degree of civilization of a people which has to be governed by such means as those; but there is so much to be said on such a subject that I prefer not to discuss it."

The fact is that, though the soldiers were thoroughly *schlagued* for the thefts they had committed, the stolen property was never returned to the rightful owners. Baron Wolf took good care not to have them hunted up; the stolen goods remained in his possession, and were finally *forgotten*. He carried them away with him to Austria, no doubt with the intention of returning them some day or other, if any body should go there to reclaim them.

This want of delicacy on the part of Baron Wolf is as nothing compared to his conduct in the administration of the office which had been confided to him, the organization of which was his own work, which was carried on by him without any control. The style of accountability that he had established seemed to be intended to cover up his malfeasances. The fact is, that he was in the habit of audaciously robbing the store-houses, the districts

on which he made his levies, and even the soldiers themselves. He had for accomplices a considerable number of the officers of his army, and, I am ashamed to say, some Frenchmen, whom he had appointed as store-keepers. A miserable soldier, who might have stolen a shirt or a handkerchief, was punished with severity; but these gentlemen seemed to have no fears in ruining whole families or even entire communities; not so much by pillaging them in the ordinary sense of that word, as by an organized system of despoiling, the effects of which were even more disastrous. More than once the country people, finding their cattle driven off, their goods and all their property taken from them, and themselves reduced to despair, had taken to the woods, and banded themselves together as guerrillas against the foreign soldiers. There is no knowing what misfortunes might have resulted if the occupation had lasted much longer.

These matters were a frequent subject of confidential conversation at Monsieur Diétry's house, and the future seemed more and more threatening. Cut off from all communication with the interior of France, we knew nothing of what was going on; we had only heard that

the emperor had stopped the advance of the allies in Champagne, and that with a handful of men he had gained several signal victories over them; but on the other hand, we were informed that fresh masses of the enemy were crossing the Rhine every day, to reinforce their ranks, decimated in battle.

At length, in the month of March, an extraordinary movement was made by the Austrian army; almost all the troops of the garrison left us, leaving only such as were absolutely necessary to guard the place.

Soon there arrived over cross-roads where troops had never passed before, a whole army corps, coming from the neighborhood of Langres, and marching toward the frontiers of Switzerland by the mountain road; there were cavalry, infantry, and numerous artillery, with endless convoys of caissons and baggage-wagons.

A retrograde movement was evidently going on, but we could not tell whether it was a serious retreat or only a feint. The dejected air of the Austrian officers, and especially the change which had taken place in General Wolf—who had almost grown amiable—inclined us to the first of these opinions.

I finally made up my mind to speak to Fresnel about it, although I had taken particular pains not to talk politics with him since the day when he had given me his views on the reunion of Belgium with France; but I asked him, with an appearance of as much indifference as I could assume, what this extraordinary movement of troops meant, and why they should be withdrawn from the interior, and why the garrison of the town had been reduced to such an insignificant force.

“And do you not know,” said he, “what is going on?”

“How could I know? We receive neither letters nor papers, and you gentlemen were not likely to give us much information on such a subject.”

“Why not? For my part, if you had asked me, I should have told you all that I knew, except what my superiors might have communicated to me under the seal of secrecy. I have noted with especial interest the progress of this campaign, from which I hoped for results which I have already indicated to you. Certainly no one can be more desirous than I am to have the allied armies succeed; but that does not prevent me from sympathizing with

France in her misfortunes; for I like the French, though I have no wish to become a part of that nation. I do not like Napoleon, but I admire him, and I feel that at this moment he is greater than when, two years ago, he was marching against Russia at the head of an army of five hundred thousand men. As compared to him, I tell you, between ourselves, our Commander-in-chief Schwarzenberg, the Prussian General Blücher, and all the rest of them, are only so many pigmies.

“After the battle of Leipsic, when Napoleon returned to France, he no longer had an army; and if they had wished to pursue him, nothing could have prevented them from reaching Paris as soon as he; but they did not dare do it. Instead of moving onward, they stopped for two months and a half on the banks of the Rhine, and thus gave to Napoleon all the time he needed to organize a new army.

“Finally the allies crossed the Rhine and advanced, feeling their way into the interior of France, where they at first met with no serious opposition. They had already reached the banks of the Maine; and the army of Silesia, under the command of Blücher, which had traversed Alsace, Lorraine, and a part of Cham-

pagne, had established communication with our grand army commanded by Schwarzenberg. These two armies, more than three hundred thousand strong, were in the very heart of France. Their advance-guard was not more than forty leagues from Paris, when Napoleon left the capital and marched out to meet them.

“Certainly he never would have undertaken, with fifty or sixty thousand men at the outside, to fight against such tremendous odds, if he had had to meet their whole army; but these three hundred thousand men were scattered over a considerable extent of country, and Napoleon was enabled to attack them separately.

“He first fell upon the army of Silesia, which he overcame at Champ-Aubert, at Montmirail, and at Vauchamp. In these three engagements, which took place from the 10th to the 15th of last February, he cut the army of Silesia into several parts, broke up their communications with the army of Schwarzenberg, caused them a loss of twenty-five thousand men, with the greater part of their artillery and baggage.

“Whilst Blücher—completely beaten—was

retreating in disorder, Napoleon, without loss of time, turned upon Schwarzenberg, who was advancing through the valley of the Seine, and on the 16th of February he defeated him at Guignes, and the next day at Montereau. In these two engagements the Austrians and Russians lost seventeen thousand men. Schwarzenberg was compelled to beat a rapid retreat, and fell back to Troyes, followed closely by Napoleon, who entered that city just as the allies had abandoned it.

“ This succession of victories determined the retrograde movement which is going on even here. I have even been told that the allied sovereigns, assembled in a council of war at Bar-sur-Aube, had almost decided to fall back to the other side of the Rhine ; but it seems that they gave up this pusillanimous notion, and that fresh troops have been ordered forward to reinforce Blücher, and enable them to recommence offensive operations. Counter-orders have already reached us here to suspend the retrograde movement of our army ; and it looks to me as if, this time, it will be very difficult for Napoleon, with all his genius, to resist successfully a force ten times as numerous as his own. But, for all this, it is no less certain

that his campaign has been a wonderful success, and that he has shown himself greater than in any of the Italian campaigns which he carried on when he was General Bonaparte.

“As to the departure of the garrison from here, it was made necessary in consequence of the movement of Augereau’s army, who has advanced from Lyons to Jura, to Lons-le-Saulnier, and to Poligny. It was feared that he intended to raise the siege of Besançon, and all the troops have been sent out to meet him that could be spared from the siege. But Augereau has already fallen back, and our soldiers will return at once to resume their position. Napoleon’s lieutenants, however, do not give us much concern. As to him, it is a different affair. His presence alone at the head of an army is as good as fifty thousand men.”

I had listened with great attention to the recital of Fresnel, especially to his praise of Napoleon, which, in the mouth of an enemy, was free from suspicion. I hastened to communicate what I had heard to Monsieur Diétry, and we talked over the matter with great seriousness till quite late in the evening.

CHAPTER IX.

THE DEPARTURE OF THE AUSTRIANS—PEACE—
OPENING OF THE HIDING-PLACE—WHAT GOD
GUARDS IS WELL GUARDED.

AFTER this, Fresnel frequently informed me of what was going on. The hopes which had been raised by the last victories of Napoleon were soon dissipated. While he was advancing in pursuit of Schwarzenberg to Vitry-le-Français, the army of Silesia, reinforced with more than fifty thousand fresh troops, was marching directly on to Paris. In the mean time, Lyons had opened her gates to the enemy. Wellington, at the head of an army of Englishmen, Spaniards, and Portuguese, was occupying Bordeaux. The emperor retraced his steps to cover Paris; but, on reaching Fontainebleau, he learned that that city had capitulated, and that the allied sovereigns had made their entrance into it on the 2d of April. The treason of one of his lieutenants delivered him defenseless into the hands of his enemies. He

abdicated, and, from being a little while before the arbiter of Europe, the commander of numberless armies, he is banished to a little island in the Mediterranean, with eight or nine hundred men of his guard who remained faithful to his fortunes. At the same time, the Bourbons, exiled for nearly twenty-five years, are recalled to the throne of France, and sign a treaty of peace with the allied sovereigns. Such was the end of the bloody drama which had been going on for so many years.

One after another, these bits of news reached us in the beginning of April. The allies had shown no generosity, and the peace which they had forced the Bourbons to sign was humiliating; but it was peace at last, and was accepted by the people with joy.

Our communications were soon reopened. I received letters from my mother, who was anxious to see me as soon as possible, and I informed her that I should hasten to her side as soon as the work of the office could be reorganized.

The army which had been besieging Besançon left in its turn. Fresnel did not desire to return to Austria; he remained in France for some time, and then removed to Belgium.

Ever since we have kept up a correspondence with each other.

After the army had withdrawn, thirty thousand men belonging to the different foreign corps having passed through the town on their way to the frontier, and when we were finally relieved from *our friends, the enemy*, as we called them, the moment was at hand when the hiding-place could be opened with safety, and its treasures restored to their owners.

The Abbé David was desirous of making this occasion one of some solemnity. He invited all who were interested. A mason, who was in attendance (for there was no longer any dread of the presence of strangers), was set to work, and with his pick and spade he soon effected an opening large enough to allow two people to pass.

"Come, Monsieur de Villette," said the abbé, "you were the last one who entered there, and your effects must be the nearest to the entrance, and will have to be removed before the others can be got at."

I passed at once into the hiding-place, and took out Madame Diétry's two trunks.

"And the casket?" asked the aunt and niece in the same breath.

"Here it is," said I, coming out with a little box in my hand.

"But that is not my box," said Madame Diétry, "mine is not so elegant as that."

"It is mine," said Madame Bracieux, "and in proof of it, I have here the key." Saying which, she opened the box, and making a hasty survey of its contents, she added, "There is nothing missing, and the contents are in perfect order."

In the mean time, I had returned into the hiding-place with a lantern, and made a minute search into every corner. I could find nothing.

In despair, I came out, and found Madame Diétry a good deal alarmed, and Aglaé's eyes quite wet with tears.

We examined the space over the arches, in every direction, and all left only when it became evident that further search was useless. Madame Diétry was the object of much sympathy from those who were present, who all expressed their feelings to her as they took their leave.

As soon as we were alone, the Abbé David questioned me closely as to my recollection. Unfortunately, I was not clear, and could give no account of the manner in which the trunks

had been carried from the house of Madame Diétry to the church-roof. All that I could recall with precision was that I firmly believed having seen the casket in the place from which I had taken the box of Madame Bracieux.

The three lads, who had accompanied me, were also interrogated, but their memories seemed to be no better than mine. One of them, however, had a vague remembrance that he had seen a kind of box in my hand when I left Madame Diétry's parlor; but he had not seen it while we were on the way to the college; the darkness of the night was a sufficient reason for this. The other two remembered nothing at all, except that after having taken some delicious cordial which Madame Diétry had offered them, they felt themselves overpowered with sleep.

"And did Monsieur de Villette also drink some of that cordial?" asked Monsieur Diétry.

"Just as we did."

"What was that cordial?" asked Monsieur Diétry of his wife.

"It was some of our fine cordial from the islands. The night was cold and damp, and I thought it would warm them up."

"Madame," joined in the abbé, "your inten-

tions were no doubt very good ; but you did not think of the effect which would be produced. The fact is, and I now remember it quite distinctly, those young people reached my house in such a state of torpor and drowsiness that they were of very little use to me, and I was obliged to send them to bed. It is, therefore, fair to conclude, as the result of this investigation, that on the way from your house hither the casket must have dropped from the benumbed hands of Monsieur de Villette without his noticing it. But how or where neither he nor I can tell. Has it fallen into the hands of some of the people of the town, or into those of the Austrians? None of us can tell. If by chance it has fallen into honest hands, we may perhaps find it by advertising for it ; but this is very doubtful, and I only make the suggestion for what it may be worth."

I will not attempt to describe my own feelings. I did not dare to show myself to any of the family, and for a whole day I kept myself shut up in my room, a prey to the most violent despair. At last, after having turned over in my mind a thousand impracticable projects, my eyes rested upon a crucifix hanging over my bed ; at

once, and without reflection, I threw myself upon my knees and began to pray. I prayed long and fervently, and while praying more with my heart than with my lips, an indescribable feeling came over me, and a sort of joy entered into my soul.

When I arose from my knees, my feelings had undergone an entire change; God had inspired me with a firm and determined resolution, and I went at once to make it known to Monsieur Diétry.

I found him alone in his library, and said to him, "Sir, my negligence and heedlessness have been the occasion of a very considerable loss to yourself and to your niece. It is my duty to make it good. I am going at once to Orleans, where my mother is waiting for me. The first thing that I will do after my arrival, will be to realize from my own property an amount equal to that of which I have caused the loss. If that is not sufficient, I know that my mother will not hesitate to make up what may be deficient. I shall leave in the morning very early; present my respects to Madame Diétry and to her niece; they will neither of them see me again until I shall have repaired the mischief which I have done."

“Have you fully reflected, my friend,” said M. Diétry to me kindly, “on what you say to me?”

“Thoroughly, sir, and my resolution is not to be shaken.”

“But, my dear sir, I know the extent of your fortune; it consists principally of real-estate, and at this time the value of such property is very much impaired.”

“But I have told you that my mother will assist me.”

“I understand that; but your mother is not any better off than yourself; and would you deprive her, at her age, of a part of her income barely sufficient to meet her necessities?”

“But I am young, sir, and will take care that my labors shall prevent her from undergoing any privations.”

“But, my friend, you are still a minor, and are unable, from that fact, to carry out any of your projects.”

“That is true, but this is the 10th of May; on the 10th of next July I shall have attained my majority, and I beg you to believe, sir, that in that time, my resolution will have undergone no change.”

“Very well; if at that time you are still of

the same mind, we will see about it. But I must say that your resolution does you great honor, and that you are offering a noble reparation for an involuntary fault. As for myself, I tell you in advance that I will accept nothing; as to my niece, the matter is different. I am her guardian, and must look to her interest. If when you shall have attained your twenty-first year, you shall still persist in your resolution, I will act as a guardian ought to under such circumstances, in reference to his ward. But I enjoin you not to sell your lands; for you can not do so now at a fair price; draw your obligation for the amount, secured upon your property, and that of your mother, if she consents, and make it payable when Aglaé shall become of age, or when she shall marry, if she should do so before that time."

"If you think such a course sufficient, I will follow your advice."

After this interview, I felt quite relieved, and I made my preparations to depart at three o'clock next morning; for I was to take the stage from Strasbourg to Besançon, which arrived at Baume at that hour.

Just as I had finished packing my trunk, the servant-girl brought me word that Monsieur

and Madame Diétry wished to see me in the parlor. As soon as I made my appearance, Madame Diétry said to me, "How is this, Monsieur de Villette, that you could think of leaving us without saying adieu either to me or to poor Aglaé, who is very much disturbed at the idea of your departure? Is the misfortune which has happened sufficient to break up all the bonds of friendship which unite us? Have you apprehended that I could utter a word of reproach against you? If so, you do not know me; for far from having a thought of reproaching you, I feel nothing but the kindest sympathy."

"Madame, I appreciate your great kindness toward me; it was not from any feeling of ingratitude that I preferred leaving without seeing you. Monsieur Diétry should have explained the motives——"

"He did," interrupted Madame Diétry, smiling. "He told me that you were a big baby full of heart, and has informed me of your intentions in regard to Aglaé's affairs."

"And I," said Aglaé, in her turn, with the same pettish tone of former times, "I declare that I do not approve of any of your fine projects. I regret only one thing; the chain and

pretty little gold watch which my uncle gave me. If Monsieur de Villette will buy me another as near like it as he can, I will ask him nothing more, and will forgive him all the rest."

"Happily, mademoiselle," answered I, "you are not of an age to decide such a matter in a way so much against your interest."

"Nor you either, for my uncle has told me so."

"That is true, but I shall be in two months."

"And I in eight years; and eight years hence I will refuse every thing as I do to-day, except, be it well understood, the watch and chain."

"Many things may happen in that time," said her aunt; "in the mean while, let us wish Monsieur de Villette a pleasant journey."

Five days afterward, I was at my mother's side. Oh! how happy she was to see me again after so long an absence, so full of painful incidents. "God be praised!" cried she, "I may now indeed sing with holy Simeon, '*Nunc dimittis*,' for I see my son once more, and witness the return of our legitimate kings, who have brought peace and my child together."

My mother, as is evident, was a thorough

royalist, and her maternal affection was somewhat confounded with her political sympathies.

Notwithstanding all the tenderness with which I responded to my mother's greeting, she did not fail to notice that some profound emotion was troubling my mind, and with that sweet solicitude which only a mother's heart can feel, she inquired into its cause. I told her, even to the minutest details, of all that had happened, and of what I had determined upon to repair the misfortune I had caused.

She listened to me attentively, and after a moment's reflection, she said to me, "My child, you have done well in deciding as you have done, and I thank you for having concluded that I would be willing to join you in such an act of justice. There was no other course to take, and there was nothing to hesitate about. You have done just what your father and mother would have done, had such a misfortune happened to them. You can not but be satisfied in your conscience, and I do not see why you should be grieved about it. It is quite a loss, I admit, but the loss of money is not irreparable, and we must try some way of remedying it. I have now powerful protectors connected with our legitimate princes, and am satisfied

that I shall be able to obtain, by their influence, a lucrative position for you, by means of which you will be enabled to repair, with system and economy, the gap you have made in your patrimony."

These words of my mother completely restored my peace of mind, and I waited with perfect tranquillity for the time when I should be able to realize my projects.

On the 11th of July, when my twenty-first year was fully accomplished, I went to a notary and requested him to draw up a paper in the direction indicated by Monsieur Diétry.

A draft was prepared, to be approved by him, prior to final execution; but in order to bind myself positively, I signed it before sending it to him. By the return of the post, I received the following answer, inclosing the paper, destroyed. Here is the letter of Monsieur Diétry; I have kept it as evidence of a very remarkable fact, which might be regarded as a fable, if it were not authenticated by credible witnesses.

"I return you your paper in pieces, as null and void. 'Nonsense!' you will say; 'how can Monsieur Marteau, one of the first notaries of Orleans, draw papers which are of no effect?'

God preserve me from such an idea! read through to the end, and you will know why the aforesaid act is absolutely null, and is not worth as much as a cabbage-leaf."

I must confess that this opening quite puzzled me, and I was in a hurry to finish the balance of the letter.

"After your departure from Baume, I had bills posted throughout the town, and in various portions of the district, announcing the loss of a little box, with a description of it, and the promise of a large reward to any one who would return it. I published notices of similar import in the newspapers of this and the neighboring departments. All that I got out of it was the expense of my posters and advertisements. So we made up our minds to be resigned, and said no more about it.

"About a fortnight since, the college was reopened, after having been scrubbed from the cellar to the garret. Yesterday, my wife sent her servant-girl on some sort of an errand to the Abbé David. On her way back, she went by chance into the kitchen to talk to the cook. The conversation naturally turned upon the loss we had sustained, and she remarked that it was very unfortunate that while every body else had

hidden away their property without losing a pin, her master and mistress should have suffered such a heavy loss.

“‘Your box must have been very small, then,’ said the cook, ‘that it could thus be made away with without its being discovered by any body.’

“‘Not so very small. . . . It was of pretty good size,’ and, casting her eyes about the kitchen; ‘there,’ said she, ‘about as big as that box in the corner. O heavens!’ riveting her eyes upon it, ‘I do believe—God forgive me!—that that is our casket!’

“‘That!’ said the cook, laughing; ‘your casket must have been a nice one! Why, that’s an old box which has been used by the Austrians to black shoes on, and to put their feet on, and has had all sorts of hard usage; from all appearances, they have even tried to burn it, for a part of the lid is all charred; and that’s what I propose to do with it myself one of these days; for it is so dirty, and so completely covered with grease and blacking, that I should not care to touch it with the tongs, and it is fit for nothing but the fire.’ While the cook was talking, the servant-girl had made a closer examination. ‘I begin to think that it can hardly be the casket,’

said she, lifting it up by the handle; 'but it is locked; it is heavy. . . . If it should really turn out to be madame's casket? Will you let me take it away with me?'

"'Quite willingly; although you will only be doing wrong by raising false hopes at home.' The servant-girl did not wait twice for the permission; she hurried home from the college with the box in her hand.

"'See here, madame,' said she, 'what I have just found.' And she fell into a chair, quite out of breath.

"At the first glance, my wife recognized her casket, in spite of the filthy coat which covered it. She had the key of it on a little bunch which she always carried with her. Pale and beside herself, she hastened to open it. . . . Every thing was intact—in the same order as when she had locked it up; she emptied it out; not a jewel, not a coin, nor a bank-note was missing. She screeched out to me at once; she called for her niece; we hastened to her. . . . I leave you to imagine our joy, our happiness. Aglaé danced about like a crazy girl, and with tears in her eyes, kissed her watch and chain. I wish you had been present at the scene.

"I hastened to write to you of this joyful oc-

currence; but my letter was not finished when your dispatch reached me, inclosing the famous paper which I send back to you. Do you now understand why this act is absolutely void, without detracting in any thing from the merit of Monsieur Marteau, your notary? But, if this writing has no value as an act, it still has a great one in our eyes, as an authentic proof of your fidelity and delicacy.

“And now, my wife requests me to ask a favor of you. She wishes to celebrate with a fête the unlooked-for and despaired-of recovery of a considerable part of her niece’s fortune. But this fête would not be complete without you; she counts upon your presence, and hopes further that your mother will be able to assist at it. The journey at this season can not fail to be of service to her, and we shall all be delighted to have her spend some time with us.”

I had to read over this letter several times, so much was I overcome by my feelings.

When my mother was informed of its contents, she embraced me over and over again, with tears of joy. “Thank God, my child, for this favor; this is the first thing to do.”

And we both knelt down and made an act

of thanksgiving to our Lord for this signal benefit.

As soon as she had composed herself, she said, "I will certainly accept the invitation of Madame Diétry. I shall be happy to resume my acquaintance with that estimable family, and to see the famous casket which has caused you so much trouble and uneasiness."

We finally set out for Baume at the beginning of August, and as we traveled by short stages, we did not arrive at our destination until the 12th. You may imagine the reception we met with.

The fête was charming. Among the invited guests were all those who had had their valuables in the hiding-place. The Abbé David occupied the place of honor, at the right of Madame Diétry. At the dessert, there was placed in the middle of the table the casket which had been so miraculously preserved; it had been washed and cleaned, and was filled with flowers and fruits of the season. Every one spoke of the story of the vicissitudes and dangers to which it had been exposed, during the four months that it had spent in the guard-room, through which so many thousand soldiers had passed, not one of whom had been tempted

to open it, though it might so easily have been done with the point of a sword or a bayonet, or even with a knife. All sorts of remarks and lots of jokes at my expense followed each other in rapid succession.

“O gentlemen!” said Madame Diétry, “do not run Monsieur de Villette too hard; he has paid dear enough for a moment’s heedlessness, which was quite excusable at his age, especially under the circumstances in which he was placed, and he has nobly made amends for it.”

“You are quite right, madame,” said the Abbé David, “the only further reflection which this extraordinary circumstance suggests is that which I made to you when you consulted me first upon the security of hiding-places. I told you then, and repeat it again to-day, *What God guards is well guarded.*” After that, nobody bantered me any more, except Mademoiselle Aglaé, who continued to tease me more than ever. But I afterward got my revenge.

“And how, my dear papa?” said one of Monsieur de Villette’s grandchildren, “how did you revenge yourself on Mademoiselle Aglaé?”

“By marrying her,” replied the old gentleman, laughing. “Yes, my children, the playful, teasing little Aglaé, whom I have so often men-

tioned in this story, is now your venerable grandmother."

"But," said one of the students, "mamma's name is not Aglaé; her name is Mary; and we always celebrate her feast on the 15th of August."

"That is true; but when she was a child, she was called Aglaé, a name given to her, I know not why, and which was too mythological to suit her, and so she dropped it, to resume the beautiful name of Mary, which had been given to her in baptism."

"But you told us, a little while ago, that she was only thirteen years old; do people get married at thirteen?"

"No, my child, but during her residence at Baume, which lasted more than a month, my mother, Monsieur and Madame Diétry, spoke of this union as a project which might be accomplished at a later period, if it should then be agreeable to the parties concerned.

"And in fact the marriage did take place five years afterward; at which time I was twenty-six, and little Aglaé had grown up to be Mademoiselle Marie Diétry, a young lady of eighteen, and quite sensible.

"Among the wedding presents, alongside

of the bride's corbeille figured the famous casket. It contained the dowry of the youthful bride, increased by the care of her guardian, which had brought it up to eighty thousand francs; and besides, the same silver service and the same laces which had been in it during its occupation of the Austrian guard-room. This was one of the bridal presents which Madame Diétry made to her niece. She added to it a superb lace veil, embroidered with my coat-of-arms, with this motto, which I have ever since adopted, *What God guards is well guarded.*

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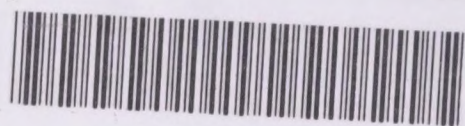
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